

BY COMPTON MACKENZIE

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THE SOUTH WIND OF LOVE

BEING VOLUME TWO OF 'THE FOUR WINDS OF LOVE'

By

COMPTON MACKENZIE

BOOK TWO

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The South Wind of Love

IN SPITE OF SUPPOSING THAT HE WOULD CARRY UP WITH him to Salonica a problem of international morality John was immediately upon his arrival so deeply plunged into the work of Captain Spicer's Bureau that he had neither time nor energy to consider even questions of private morality much less bother his head about international morality. But in the interest and excitement of his work he did not pause to ask himself whether the results were worth forgoing all recreation, all rest, and often even three nights' sleep in the week to achieve

"Thank the Lord, you've arrived, Ogilvie," George Lingfield told him, when on the evening of his arrival they were sitting over cups of Turkish coffee and a brazier of charcoal in the frowsty little back room of the Bureau in the centre of Salonica. "I've had to let all the counter-espionage go to hell so as to keep up with the military information. If we aren't blasted careful these damned Bulgars are going to run right through us. I tell you I wake sweating sometimes to think of what may happen."

John was pondering what manner of man was hidden behind the unprepossessing exterior of his partner, unprepossessing that is to the conventional eye. Foxy one might have called him if he had been smaller, but though a man may have a long sharp nose and tight curly rufous hair and a bright suspicious eye, when that man is at least six feet four inches tall with loosely knit powerful limbs and freckled hands seeming as large as joints of meat, foxy becomes the wrong epithet. For so large a man his clothes gave an impression of extreme neatness, of such neatness indeed that the general effect was of flashiness which an Ascot tie of spotted foulard fastened

with a large gold safety-pin carrying the cameo of a Gorgon's head did nothing to mitigate John knew that Lingfield's mother had been a Biddulph, but there was nothing of the Levantine about him. He rather resembled somebody you fell in with in a railway-carriage on the way back from the races at Alexandra Park. Yet what puzzled John was that if he had shut his eyes and tried to judge Lingfield by ear he would have sworn he was a man of breeding. Later he was to learn that nearly twenty years ago Lingfield had been a subaltern in the Dragoon Guards who had sent in his papers hurriedly to avoid a card scandal which might have led to his being cashiered. A place had been found for him somewhere in the Levant through the Biddulph interest, and becoming associated with Manners he had supplied the older man with much of the information that had made Captain Spicer esteem his services so highly. Whether Manners or Lingfield knew more to the detriment of the other was a moot point. What was certain was that neither of them was ever heard to be censorious at the expense of the other.

"You really think there's a chance of their breaking through?" John asked.

"I wouldn't care to lay six to four against it," Lingfield replied. "Well, look what we've got here to stop 'em. The fag end of a new Division that messed things up at Suvla."

"That's not fair criticism," John interrupted. "It wasn't the Division which messed things up. It was the generals. I was at Anzac, you know."

"I know you were. And I was at G H Q. that week," Lingfield retorted. "Anyway, it's not worth an argument. Mahon is in command of the British contingent, and Mahon is so bloody mad with the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and all its work that he can even manage to obey the orders of a French G O.C. without apoplexy."

"That's all to the good."

"It would be all to the good if Sarrail had not been sent out here to get rid of him from France because he could not keep out of politics. Do you think Sarrail will keep out of politics here?"

Lingfield put a fleshy forefinger to his nose before he went on:

"Then we have a few Serbs left over from the retreat, we have a few Russians left over from nowhere, and I'm told we may presently have a few Italians to remind us that the Venetians sacked Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade. To add a rich flavour of garlic to the wretched mixture we have a Greek army corps in alleged control of their recently acquired city, most of the officers of which are torn between a desire to see Sarrail and his circus troupe swept into the sea and dread lest the Bulgars having achieved that may take it into their heads to sweep them into the sea afterwards. And if the Germans can persuade the Turks to fight beside the Bulgars, swept into the sea they all bloody well will be. No wonder Sydney Manners has developed an incontinent bladder. I tell you he's wise to remove himself to Cyprus, though it's going to be a hell of a bore communicating with him there."

"But so long as we hang on to the Peninsula the Turks won't be able to do much," John said.

"So long as we do, Ogilvie. But mark my words, that won't be for much longer. And if we don't evacuate Gallipoli, the winter weather will do what the Turks have not been able to do, that is put us off it."

"Which surely would mean heavy reinforcements here?"

Again Lingfield jammed that fleshy forefinger against his nose.

"Not here. They're already squealing in Egypt for troops. That's where the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force will go. And that's where the Turks want to go. It's a good job they do. Our only hope is that the Germans

won't succeed in using them on this front But all the same it's going to be the devil's own business to maintain our communications if the Germans get many more submarines to work out here Oh, I tell you, Ogilvie, we're in one hell of a mess The only bright spot is that the Germans are stupider than we are, and don't know how to take advantage of our mistakes "

"And yet the conception of the Dardanelles Expedition was a good one," John said

"Oh, the conception was all right The trouble came later First of all the generals in France and the politicians in Paris and London tried abortion When that didn't succeed they tried to stifle the infant at birth When that failed they tried to withhold the breast And when the infant continued to show signs of life they overlaid it with this Salonica show But as you say, Ogilvie, the conception was splendid I suppose Winston Churchill fell in love with the good ship *Queen Elizabeth*?"

"Then apparently you don't really think that it was a good conception?"

"Yes, I do I couldn't resist that last observation Yes, I believe, if we had given a fiftieth as much care to the Dardanelles Expedition as we gave to sending the British Army to Flanders last year, you and I would be in Constantinople now instead of this filthy little room in this sink of a town "

"I thought Salonica looked fascinating as we sailed in, though I agree it looks better from the outside "

"You're right," Lingfield said bitterly "But wait till you've been here a little while, trying to get something done to clear out the rabble which makes counter-espionage just a bad joke Macedonian comitadjes who'll slit a man's throat for a glass of mastika, Old Turks, Young Turks, Spanish Jews, the pick of the population in some ways, Greek whores, French whores, Armenian whores, Rumanian whores, Serbian whores, Levantine

catamites, brothels, stews, dancing-halls, knocking-shops, drinking-dives, pox, lice, bugs, fever, and gold There's Salonica! And just to help matters along all the Consulates of the Central Powers working at full blast and counting even the piles of some costive Brigadier for the information of Berlin and Vienna Well, it'll be your job to deal with them So far as I'm concerned all I care about is to prevent my own agents getting snaffled And that's what I want you to concentrate on, Ogilvie If I get men into Bulgaria and Turkey, I want to give them a run for their money by trying to check up on enemy agents who may nose them out before they start Can you tinkle a typewriter?"

"Not very fast, but I should soon get quick "

"Well, I'm afraid you'll have to work your own machine most of the time We've only got one clerk. That's young Dawson. You can hear him at it now in the next room "

Dawson was a boy of nineteen who in spite of his name spoke English with a broken accent, though he wrote it accurately enough, having been educated at the American college in Constantinople.

"I'll be able to do all the typing I want," John said.

Lingfield winked

"You don't yet know what a thirst our Mr Manners has for useless information You must cram him with paper as if you were fattening a capon I'll let you have Dawson when I can, but I have to move around such a lot recruiting my rascals and spend so much time knocking into their heads what I want to know that when it comes to getting the information down I haven't the energy left to use a machine myself. I've a couple of fellows you'll find pretty useful. One's a Greek and the other's a Serbian Probably as the show increases out here, which it will do, if we're not pushed into the sea, we'll get more funds, and then you can enlarge But you understand,

don't you, that your men's work at present is first and foremost to watch any of my proposed agents and report on their trustworthiness and next to watch if the enemy is on to their business. Any gossip that comes along about anything you like from the private lives of officers of high rank to the reputed existence of super-spies in the hinterland of Macedonia you can use to feed Manners who will tin it in Cyprus and send it from there to London, where it will seem highly nutritious and will go far to win the war."

"And what is our position with regard to the military authorities?" John asked

Once more that fleshy forefinger to the nose

"At present our position has not been regularized, as they say. You can if you like try to work with Headquarters, but if you succeed you'll be a marvel. The attitude now is that we are a comic, ineffective, and rather ungentlemanly excrescence on the fair face of Salonica. The information I have handed to the soldiers is accepted by them in the way that people accept handbills from down-at-heel sandwich-men. It is accepted to spare the poor man's feelings, and that is all. I don't think it is ever read, and I am quite sure it is never acted upon. However, should our Bureau grow and grow comparatively healthy we shall become an object of envy, and we may look out for squalls."

"But the people at Imbros were not like that."

"Weren't they?" Lingfield queried. "I can't say I found them particularly cordial, though I admit Selward was a thoroughly fair and decent little man. I dined with them every night in the Intelligence Mess and found myself regarded as the kind of boulder who is unfortunately necessary in times of war. I know the British Army, Ogilvie."

He stopped and looked sharply at John for a moment, but presuming from John's expression that he knew

nothing yet about his own past he did not enlighten him and continued his appreciation of the attitude of the British military authorities in Salonica

"Yes, I know the British Army, and it is not notorious for broadmindedness. However, don't let me prejudice you against the head sheikhs of the Salonica Army. But I'm afraid you'll be tarred with the same brush as myself here. And don't think that it will help you to have been at Gallipoli. On the contrary, that will tell heavily against you. The staff here is jealous of Gallipoli, for it is still technically under the orders of G H Q Imbros, and it resents that state of subordination very bitterly. It is at the moment much more anxious to break away from the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force than to attack the Bulgarians."

"Aren't you being rather bitter?"

"Am I? Wait a while, *mon vieux*. Wait till you have met that charming knight-errant Major Henry Woburn Wicksteed. He is the liaison officer between ourselves and Headquarters. We are not received in the sanctuary itself. Major Wicksteed calls upon us every day and enquires if we have anything that might interest the great men who are the brains of this expedition. You'll enjoy Major Henry Woburn Wicksteed. Yes, Major Henry Woburn Wicksteed of the Duke of Cambridge's Light Infantry—once upon a time dug up from some manure heap in the Midlands where he was already swelling like a gourd in the idleness of half-pay, to grow into a regular bloody pumpkin in Salonique. His real initials are four letters—two consonants, an aspirate, and a vowel. However, you'll soon meet him, and be able to revel in his company. Well, I think that's about all I can tell you about your job for the present. I've got to go out now and see a fellow in a village about ten miles out. Oh yes, we have a Ford. And that is a great grievance to Major Henry Woburn Wicksteed who actually has to walk

back and forth between here and Headquarters. If I were you I'd get off to bed. You'll find it fairly comfortable. Most of the bugs have gone into winter quarters."

Lingfield rose, and huge though he was seemed to glide from the room like a shadow, away upon one of his mysterious errands. John turned over the files for an hour, and then decided to take his partner's advice and go to bed. Sleep, however, was long in coming. He seemed to be swirling helplessly among the eddies of the conflicting ambitions of human beings, political parties, military commands, and nations.

John settled down to his work in charge of the counter-espionage or B side of Captain Spicer's Bureau. At the time he supposed he was building up a great store of experience from which in the future when the war was over he would be able to draw for his plays. He assured himself in moments of acute mental and moral exhaustion that, even if his excessive work was of less value to the winning of the war than he would like it to be, it was nevertheless of inestimable value to his own Muse. She good lady like a careful housewife should be stocking her larder with potted experience. That such experience might turn mouldy or rancid never entered his head. That one day he might look back to this work in Salonica as to the existence of a ragpicker poking among the refuse laid bare by the collapse of society under the strain of war never occurred to him. That the treasures of a ragpicker which seemed so bright among the foetid rubbish at the moment they were uncovered would in the long run become indistinguishable from the rubbish in which they had been hidden, was outside his imagination while he carried on his shoulder the ragpicker's basket and held in his hand the ragpicker's fork.

Manners left Athens and established himself as Captain Spicer's representative in Cyprus. Half a dozen

agents, originally employed in espionage when the hopes of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force still ran high and since then hanging about Athens and the Piræus to collect and report tittle-tattle, because according to Manners a dismissed agent was a perpetual menace to the secrecy and security of his late employers, arrived in Salonica. Being useless to Lingfield, they had to be used by John. The appetite grows with eating. The more agents Captain Spicer engaged the more enemy agents appeared. The Dardanelles was evacuated. John was hardly aware of the tragic withdrawal, being at the moment intensely preoccupied with the expulsion of the enemy consuls from Salonica and the seizure by the French Intelligence of the archives.

"I hope you are going to make strong representations to the French to give us an opportunity to examine thoroughly the mass of material about enemy activities in Salonica they must possess."

This remark was addressed to Major Wicksteed one morning at the end of January 1916 when almost a month had passed since the French had seized the consular archives without a fragment of information about the contents having been disgorged to their colleagues.

The Major lightly tapped his boots, his beautifully polished boots, with the loaded leather-topped cane he carried. The gesture reminded John of the restless tail of a watchful pike waiting among the reeds for his prey. The Major's eyes observing him had the impersonal expression of a hungry pike. Nothing was more certain than that the Major would have gobbled up Captain Spicer's Bureau and everybody attached to it. Yet in the cold glance of those stone-grey eyes there was not the faintest gleam of greed. One would have welcomed some evidence of feeling, base though the feeling might be, instead of this fishlike disinterestedness.

"I'm not sure if Colonel Skinner will approve of the material's being handed over to you and Lingfield," said the Major. "Colonel Skinner feels, and I'm bound to admit I see his point of view, that the existence of a semi-independent organization like this in Salonica is prejudicial to military discipline."

"I know, I know," said John impatiently. "You've told us as much a good many times already, Major. And that being the case, I can't understand why you don't make an application in the right quarter to have us removed."

On Lingfield's advice John had not put on uniform since he came to Salonica. In civilian clothes he found as Lingfield had warned him he would that it was much easier to handle recalcitrant superior officers with the insolence that, alas, so often paid better than courtesy.

"You seem very sure of yourselves here, Ogilvie," said the Major. "But we have just had a notification from London that in future neither you nor Lingfield are to send out any information without supplying us with a copy."

"But surely Lingfield already follows that system?" John replied. "I certainly do, for being of a naturally optimistic temperament I am always hoping when I pass any piece of information to you for suitable action that one day suitable action will be taken."

The Major chuckled drily.

"If we took action every time you asked us to, Ogilvie, I'm afraid we should very often make fools of ourselves."

"Are you really afraid of making fools of yourselves?" John asked, raising his eyebrows. "You must spend many sleepless nights at Headquarters."

The Major struck his boot sharply with the cane.

"You won't improve your standing with us by talking

like that, Ogilvie. I strongly advise you to keep a check on your tongue "

"But, my dear Major," John burst out in exasperation, "I'm not a professional soldier or a professional sailor. What the devil do I care about my standing with professionals?"

"There happens to be a war going on," the Major observed, demonstrating that he was speaking sarcastically by twirling his rich brown moustache

"My god, you wouldn't find me sitting here listening to you if there were not," John snapped back.

"Yes, but I advise you to remember that so long as there is a war going on you are not a private individual and can't put on those high and mighty airs of independence I'm not trying to be offensive I'm speaking for your own good After all, you're in rather a different position from Lingfield But some of our people are inclined to say 'birds of a feather' and all that I've always stuck up for you and said you were quite a decent chap really, but that you'd been given wrong ideas about everything by Lingfield "

John listened to this long speech with the explanation of it gradually dawning on him, to wit that he was being invited to ally himself with the Army against Lingfield, and perhaps even against Captain Spicer. He whitened with anger

"Look here, let me give you a piece of advice in turn, Major So long as it's your melancholy job to act as liaison between the Bureau and Headquarters, bloody well act as that and nothing else If Colonel Skinner asked you to come down to the Bureau and try to persuade me to work against Lingfield, tell Colonel Skinner to do his own dirty intriguing, and I'll have much pleasure in telling him personally what I think about him and his methods Now, please don't give me any more of your good advice, or I shall be really offensive. What I asked

you before this agreeable little discussion began was whether you are going to make any efforts to persuade the French to disgorge those consular archives for examination. Incidentally, this request has nothing to do with Lingfield. It's I who want the stuff for my B files. As you know I've several times ventured to suggest your people should take action against some of the more pestilent agents. But that's your look-out. My look-out is to do all I can not to let Lingfield down by failing to find out when he has got hold of the wrong man, and when he gets hold of the right man to do all I can to help him get the best out of him. It would be invaluable if I could examine these documents the French have. As you won't ask for them, would H Q have any objections to my asking the French Chef de Renseignements for them myself?"

"What go over the heads of good god, you really have a most extraordinary idea of the way things are done in the Army. . . but I suppose you don't know any better. Certainly it would be most improper if you approached the French Intelligence people directly. I warn you if you did try anything like that Colonel Skinner wouldn't rest until he'd run you and your whole precious Bureau out of Salonique."

"Well, that's clear enough anyway. But you professional soldiers have a queer notion of running a war. I suppose you'd rather be beaten by the Germans than surrender one point of etiquette?"

"That's rather a silly gibe," the Major observed.

"I wish it *were* a gibe, but unfortunately it's the damned disgraceful truth." Then John bethought himself of the one certain way of drawing Major Wicksteed. "In justice to professional soldiers I must add that my last remark could never have been made about Gallipoli. Salonica is the seamy side of *la vie militaire*, and of course one must remember that you people have not been sent

here to fight the Bulgarians but to incommode the French ”

“I’m afraid I shall have to report your words to Colonel Skinner,” the Major said venomously

John laughed

“Then in that case I feel quite secure. No action has yet been taken by Colonel Skinner on any report Good morning, Major, I must get on with my work.”

That night John told Lingfield about this acrimonious interview

“Puffy little swine!” his partner commented. “But they’ve evidently had another shot to swallow us up You see the snag, of course, about getting this notification from London that we’re not to send out any information without a copy of such information being sent to Skinner”

“I suppose it’s just another attempt at obstruction ”

“It’s more than that If after that notification they can catch us out over one report, they’ll use it as an excuse to close down on the Bureau At least, they won’t close down. They’ll put Wicksteed in charge That’s the plot ”

John remembered the Major’s hint that he himself could become *persona grata* if he would work against Lingfield

“Oh, so that’s it, is it?” Lingfield exclaimed, and there was nothing of the fox about him now His expression was wolfish “I see the game If you can be squared you can stay on and do all the work and Wicksteed can have the credit and the decorations Oh well, I know one way of getting level with that little bastard ”

“I wouldn’t bother about any of them,” John urged

“I’ll bother all right They’ve asked for it, and they shall bloody well have it ”

“What are you going to do?”

“Merely get a bit of my own back,” said Lingfield, “if I can. And I’m pretty sure I can ”

Aidan Harper was regarded by now as a permanent feature of Salonica like the White Tower. He had settled there as a young man in the late 'eighties, coming from Tyneside, and started in business on his own as a coal-merchant. The business had prospered. He had made good money out of the Græco-Turkish war in 1897. He had survived the Young Turk revolution, and during the Balkan War he had made money from all the belligerents. He might reasonably hope to retire at the end of the Great War with a fortune. In 1884, when he was twenty-five years old, he had married an Anglo-Levantine who was Greek on her mother's side, and it was probably on account of this that he had decided to abandon his job as traveller for a large Durham colliery and start in business on his own account. By her he had two sons and two daughters. Both sons had gone to England soon after the outbreak of the war, and both held commissions in New Army battalions, one in the Northumberland Fusiliers, the other in the Durham Light Infantry. His elder daughter had married the son of a Tyneside coal exporter, and was now settled in Newcastle. His younger daughter Grace, for he was a widower, kept house for him in his agreeable villa on the outskirts of Salonica.

And Grace was a problem to her father. She alone of Aidan Harper's family had never shown the slightest inclination to remain associated with coal. The eligible (from a coal point of view) young bachelors who proposed to her were almost contemptuously refused, but in 1913 she had fallen in love with a German commission-agent at the Piræus called Heinrich Wahl. It was rumoured that Wahl, who was a man of forty, a battered and faded but still handsome blond of the virile Teutonic type which degenerates in unfavourable circumstances from virility to animality, had once owned a more aristocratic name. The scars on his face of old duels and an arrogance which not even the expedient truckling of a

commission-agent could eliminate from his manner, seemed to bear out the current legend that as a young man he had been involved in a regimental scandal and had had to get out of a crack regiment in the German Army

Whether Heinrich Wahl had proposed to Grace Harper might be doubted, but when in August 1914 he was called back to Germany for military service she told everybody that they were engaged and shocked the patriotic British community, which like all British communities in exile was just a little more fervidly patriotic because it was not at home, by the passion with which she defended Germany against criticism and by the bitterness with which she derided the efforts of her own countrymen to defeat what she insisted on proclaiming was an invincible enemy. Grace Harper's pro-German sentiments, deplorable though they might sound in the mouth of her respected father's daughter, did not seriously matter until the Allies decided to occupy Salonica and simultaneously Heinrich Wahl arrived back at the Piræus, ostensibly to take up his business as a commission-agent, but actually to play the part that was being played by Captain Spicer's representatives all over Europe.

It was now that Grace Harper's attractiveness to middle-aged British officers working at the base at Salonica became a matter of some concern to Captain Spicer's Bureau. So long as the enemy consulates were working at full blast it was hopeless to think of damming the flow of information; but when the consuls were expelled and their archives seized the necessity of damming other channels of information became imperative. Leakage would always persist whatever the perfection of counter-espionage, but possible conduits like Grace Harper could not be tolerated. Yet Captain Spicer's Bureau possessed no proof that the daughter of the respectable, genial, and hospitable coal-merchant Aidan

Harper was communicating with her former lover at the Piræus, and without that proof it would be impossible to persuade the military authorities to take any action. Aidan Harper was a jolly old boy who kept a cabinet of good cigars and a cellar of good wine. Aidan Harper was as patriotic an Englishman as you could hope to meet anywhere. His only two sons had both joined up at the beginning of the war and were both of them now fighting in France. If Grace delighted in praising the organization of the German Army that did not make her a spy, and when one or two middle-aged Majors had demonstrated to her that the organization of the British Army, at any rate on the supply side, was not to be sneered at, Grace Harper had several times admitted that perhaps she might have exaggerated German virtues. And she was growing less pro-German under the influence of the British Army. Poor girl, after all, she had been engaged to a German officer, and girls were girls, eh what, don't you know? She couldn't help feeling a little embittered. One ought to be sorry for her and give her as good a time as was possible. Active Service, of course, and all that, don't you know, but an occasional little joy-ride in a car did no harm to anybody. And dash it, you couldn't find everywhere a house as open as Aidan Harper's. Besides, Grace was a jolly good-looking girl, and much better company than those cabaret tarts. Look at one of them and it cost you a bottle of filthy sweet champagne. If she sat on your knee in a box it cost you two bottles. If you tickled hers it cost you three bottles. That kind of thing was all very well for young asses of subalterns back from the front line with nothing else to think of (except being killed by a Bulgarian bullet they might have added but never did), but it was more dignified for a field-officer to keep away from that kind of woman. Some said Grace Harper was hot stuff. Well, no tales out of school, and all that, don't you know, but . . . anyway she was

damned sympathetic A woman ought to be a good listener, and so few women did know how to listen. But Grace could listen, and if you were in the mood she could talk And by Jove, Colonel, what a figure!

However, in the underworld of Salonica the rumour that Grace Harper was sending messages to Larissa regularly twice a week was persistent, and about a fortnight after the expulsion of the enemy consuls, John got in touch with a Greek who offered if it was made worth his while to secure one of these packets that Grace Harper sent to Larissa, thence presumably to be taken on by train to Athens A substantial percentage of the reward was paid out, but that night the Greek was shot in a drinking-dive It may have been a coincidence that he found himself involved in a shooting affray that night, but it looked to John as if he had been suspected and got rid of as a warning to others. He considered, however, that the weight of presumptive evidence against Grace Harper was strong enough to write a stronger report on her behaviour and urge to the military authorities her deportation He showed the report to his partner

"Very pretty," said Lingfield "And now what?"

"I think the case against her is black enough to have her sent back to England," John declared

"No proof"

"No positive proof, I admit But in wartime enough suspicion to make her deportation justifiable"

"Have you ever met her?"

"I've seen her"

"Handsome bit of goods"

"Yes, I suppose so," John admitted unwillingly. "Rather too much the stock stage adventuress for my taste"

"That's as may be She has a great charm for various officers at the Base."

"That's just what I've pointed out"

"And you think it will make agreeable reading for their friends?"

"I've mentioned no names."

"No, but don't forget that our pal the Major is almost her warmest admirer."

"I didn't know that," John admitted, a little mortified by his ignorance.

"Oh, Wicksteed is too cute to be caught going joy-riding with her and pointing out the latest ammunition dump. But he dines at Harper's house regularly, and I happen to know he has proposed marriage to Grace."

"How do you know that?"

"From the alluring Grace herself. I was a friend of hers before Heinrich came on the scene. In fact I slept with her. I was quite fond of the wench, but when she met Heinrich she found him just a bit more of a hopeless wreck of an officer and a gentleman than myself, and she gave me the go by."

It was the first time Lingfield had ever mentioned his past to John, and the tone of his voice made him wince.

"But you're not suggesting that Wicksteed is . . ."

"Oh no," Lingfield cut in. "No, no. One of Grace's attractions for middle-aged dug-out Majors is the freedom of her conversation and the restraint of her petticoats. She's all promise and no performance. And that's what middle-aged dug-out Majors enjoy, being all promise and no performance themselves."

"Then you mean to say that if I hand this report to Wicksteed," John asked, "he'll take it as a personal affront?"

"Try it on him."

"But look here, if you're still on friendly terms with this woman, why don't you tell her we know what she's doing?"

"She has been told, but . . . look here, I'm afraid you'll have to forgive what I'm going to say, Ogilvie . . ."

I don't honestly think you're a match for Grace yet, and I've thought it wiser policy to keep in with her. You see, I find her rather useful as a means for dealing with agents who play the game of double-crossing with me. Those I suspect I contrive to let her know about, and that cramps their style in Bulgaria or Turkey."

"But suppose you suspected any of them wrongly?"

"That would be the fortune of war. But I'm not usually wrong."

"Then *you* don't want me to send in this report about Grace Harper?" John demanded.

"By all means send it in. Wicksteed is so infatuated with Grace that he may tell her about it. That will give me a chance to give her a friendly hint first. When she finds my warning confirmed she'll think all the more highly of me."

"But if our people do take action and deport her?" John asked.

Lingfield laughed.

"I don't fancy we need bother about that contingency. If they do, well, I shan't break my heart over Grace, though, mark you, she's attractive. I enjoy her cynicism about men and I enjoy baffling her. She'd like me to try and make love to her again, and it shakes her self-confidence when I won't. She can't understand why her having chucked me for Heinrich Wahl doesn't make her more than ever desirable."

"I think I shall send in the report," John decided after a pause.

That report had brought a visit from the Major.

"Look here, young fellahmelad, you'll have to watch your P's and Q's," Wicksteed began. "You can't make accusations against the daughters of respectable British residents here without a shred of proof. Colonel Skinner was pretty fed up. He knows Harper quite well. So do I. I realize it's done with the best intentions, but you ought

to beware of idle gossip Gossip's inevitable in Salonique under these conditions But, take my advice, and don't pass it on to us Colonel Skinner is willing to say no more about it on condition of course that you don't send that report anywhere else Have you?"

John, knowing what he now did about the Major's relations with Grace Harper, fancied he could detect a slight anxiety in his voice as he asked this question, and an unmistakable relief in his manner when he replied that the report had not yet been sent anywhere else

"Oh well, then no harm has been done I'll let Colonel Skinner know you're sorry about the indiscretion "

"But I'm not in the least sorry," John objected "I admit I have no positive proof against the woman yet, but if I get proof I certainly don't intend to let the matter drop "

"This kind of muck-raking is hardly a job worthy of a gentleman, is it?" the Major asked "However, as you're the only person likely to get into a mess I suppose it's a waste of breath arguing with you "

It had been a fortnight after this interview that Major Wicksteed announced to John the notification he had received that no report was to be sent elsewhere before being passed by the military authorities and had hinted at the same time that if he cared to dissociate himself from his colleague he might be able to work amicably with himself and Colonel Skinner

A week later John had just fallen asleep about four o'clock of a cold February morning when he was wakened by the light's being switched on over his head and sitting up startled he saw his colleague beside the bed.

"I've got it for you," Lingfield announced.

"Got what?"

"The proof that Grace is sending stuff to Heinrich Wahl "

He tossed a small black note-book into John's lap.

"Read that."

John turned over the pages. Every one was closely packed with figures and facts of significant military information, interspersed here and there with small sketches and maps.

"But this doesn't prove she communicated this information if this book is hers."

"Oh, it's hers all right. I got it out of her bedroom," said Lingfield. "But read that."

He handed him a letter with the Piræus postmark. It was written in German, which John did not read easily, and he asked Lingfield to translate it for him.

Lingfield read aloud:

"My dear Grace, Thank you very much for your interesting news which gave me great pleasure to receive. I am anxious to hear if you have met any of our Italian friends yet and to hear how they are looking, and also where your father has stored his last consignment of coals."

"That's probably munitions," Lingfield broke off to suggest.

"Probably," John agreed.

"There's only one thing to do with this," said Lingfield when he had finished reading the letter. "Write out a report and slip it to our friend Rodier."

Rodier was the French Intelligence officer whom John had met on the way to Icaros from Gallipoli and who was now working at French G. Q. G. He had renewed the acquaintance made on the *Bourgainville* and was often round at Captain Spicer's Bureau to try to pick up odds and ends of information, though he was chary of giving any in return.

"Won't there be a devil of a row with our people if we go over their heads to the French?"

"It's the only way to have Grace thrown out," said Lingfield

John asked him why he was so anxious for her deportation

"I want to get a bit of my own back," Lingfield said "And by God this is going to give me a nice juicy slice "

"You'd better let me commit the breach of discipline," John suggested "Then you're clear "

"That's very decent of you, Ogilvie But I'm having my revenge on Wicksteed, and it'll taste sweeter if I do it on my own. I didn't mean to say anything about it, but I couldn't resist telling you "

"Does she know you've got hold of this note-book?"

"Not yet I put her to sleep "

"Put her to sleep?"

"Yes, I doped a drink we had together in her bedroom Nothing violent. Just an extra deep repose after a *belle nuit d'amour* "

"In her father's villa?"

"Oh yes, it's quite easy She sleeps on the ground-floor. I told you she was piqued by my indifference to her charms nowadays. She couldn't resist the triumph when I fell Poor Grace! However, she'll be much safer at Newcastle with her sister She might have got into serious trouble presently "

"But suppose the French make an example of her?"

"They won't They'd shoot her all right if she was a Frenchwoman, but they'll be quite content to demand her deportation."

"I don't feel quite easy about it somehow," said John. "It's all rather beastly, isn't it?"

"You seem to forget that we're at war, Ogilvie. Ha-ha! Well, that dirty little tyke Wicksteed won't forget it now."

The unpleasant business was handled most tactfully by the French. They demanded that Miss Grace Harper should leave Salonica by the first boat to Marseilles and proceed thence immediately to England. They were asked to give reasons for this strange request and replied that the whole matter was so *pénible* that they hoped for the sake of military discipline they would not be asked to do more than repeat their formal demand that Miss Grace Harper should leave Salonica at the first opportunity. Several middle-aged officers urged Aidan Harper to bestir himself on behalf of his daughter, but the coal-merchant, who had his own doubts about Grace, declined to make a fuss, and within a few days of the French complaint she left Salonica.

The day after she had gone Wicksteed came round to the Bureau. Lingfield was out.

"I'm afraid there's going to be trouble about this business, Ogilvie," he announced.

"The Grace Harper business? Why?"

"We are wondering whether a report was sent to the French from this office."

"But you have a spy in this office, you ought to know," John told him.

The pasty face of Major Wicksteed was flushed with an oily pink which gave his cheeks the look of chilled salmon.

"What the devil do you mean by that, Ogilvie?"

John clapped his hand down on the bell standing on his desk.

Dawson came in from the next room. John turned to him.

"Major Wicksteed wants to know why you didn't let him know that a report on Grace Harper was sent from this office to French G.Q.G.," he said as coldly and casually as he could.

"I don't understand, Mr Ogilvie," the clerk replied.

He was a weedy youth with loose lips and a pair of ill-fitting steel-rimmed spectacles

"As you seem incapable of understanding English, I'll repeat the question in Greek," John said

"I understand my own language quite well, I thank you, Mr Ogilvie," the clerk muttered sulkily.

"Then answer "

"I didn't know nothing . . . I didn't know anything of a paper about Grace Harper "

"And when listening at the keyhole to Mr Lingfield and myself talking you never heard such a report discussed?" John went on

"No, sir That is, how could I, because I never would listen at a keyhole "

"Very well Get back to your work," John told him.

Dawson returned to his typewriter His shoulders were twitching as if they had been cut by a whip

"You heard what he said, Major?" John asked

"I don't quite understand what this little drama is meant to convey," the Major blustered

"Don't you? I'll explain It is meant to convey that since the evening of December 22nd last at seven o'clock when he came to see you at your house Dawson has been receiving a weekly wage from you to let you have a list of every report sent out from the Bureau; and holds your promise that when the Bureau has been absorbed by you he will be taken on as your confidential clerk "

"Oh, so you've been spying on me, have you?" the Major snarled

"Set a thief to catch a thief, Major "

"I suppose you realize that you have now as good as admitted that a report *was* sent out over our heads?"

"I've admitted nothing of the kind No report about Grace Harper was sent by me to the French."

"By Lingfield, then?"

"I am responsible for the B side of this work "

"You can bluff as much as you like, Ogilvie But I warn you there's going to be trouble over this disgraceful business "

"That's very kind of you, Major When the trouble comes I shall remember your kindness "

"And it's likely to be extremely unpleasant for you."

John sighed

"I do wish you'd get out of your head, Major, that the kind of unpleasantness you anticipate for me has the faintest effect on my actions Do try to realize that this is not my career, and that I'm not looking for promotions or decorations or a job after the war Once you could grasp that you'd find me so harmless And what applies to me applies equally to Lingfield Nor have we the least desire to compete with official military Intelligence."

"Have you finished talking?"

"Till you make your next remark "

The Major struck his jackboots a sharp blow with his loaded cane

"You and Lingfield may think yourselves immune from military discipline, but you'll find that you're not You may talk to me as if I were a sergeant . . . "

"As a sergeant?" John interrupted "I'd talk to you much more respectfully if you *were* a sergeant "

"I'm afraid you're quite impossible, Ogilvie "

"Quite," John agreed, and the Major retreated in good order.

On a blowy March evening some five weeks after this interview, during which time Major Wicksteed's duties as a liaison officer had not included any matter beyond the routine, Lingfield and John were sitting in the frowsty little room behind the main office and discussing over coffee a project to blow up a bridge on the Bulgarian lines of communication. They had given up the problem for

the moment and were leaning back as far as it was possible to lean back in the rickety cane-chairs, listening to the wind shrieking round the house

"Did you ever read Plato's *Symposium*?" John asked.

Lingfield shook his head

"Well, there's a very vivid picture in it of the siege of Potidæa "

"What, that place at the top of the Cassandra peninsula?"

"Yes, just about thirty miles south of where we're sitting I was thinking that Socrates and Alcibiades must have sat and shivered in just such a wind as is shrieking down from Thrace to-night."

"Yes, I'm glad I haven't to go out anywhere," the other man said

As he spoke they heard above the wind a knocking on the street-door which must have been very loud to reach this room

"Who the hell's that?" Lingfield exclaimed, looking at the watch on his wrist Then 'Yanni' he shouted to the boy who did his best to look after their domestic comforts The door was opened There were heavy footsteps on the short staircase The frowsty little room seemed crowded with burly khaki forms, the military police by their red brassards Actually there were only two of them, with an Assistant Provost-Marshal

"George Lingfield?" asked the A P.M.

"Yes, what do you want?"

"I have orders to escort you under arrest to the Greek steamer *Thessalia* which sails to-morrow for the Piræus. I am instructed to inform you that if you attempt to return to Salonica you will immediately be placed under close arrest "

"Whose orders are these?"

"They are signed by the General "

"And suppose I refuse to accompany you?"

The A P M looked depressed

"Well, I hope you won't resist. I don't want to have to tell my men to use force. It would be damnably undignified. We came at night to avoid publicity."

"Look here, I'm going off to see the General," John declared

"Don't be an ass. He'll be in bed. And what good will it do?" Lingfield asked

"I don't believe he knows the facts of the case," said John heatedly. "This is a plot between Skinner and Wicksteed. They've cooked up some fairy-tale."

"No good. No good," said Lingfield impatiently. "I'll bow before the storm, but you'll have to communicate with London. I'll try to telegraph through the Legation in Athens, but they may not accept a telegram from me." He turned to the A P M. "Would you mind, sir, my having a few minutes alone with Lieutenant Ogilvie? I have to hand over to him a good deal of confidential stuff. And I must do a little packing. There's a room downstairs where you and your chaps can wait. Shall I tell our man to brew you some coffee?"

In spite of his rage John noticed how the humiliation had brought out Lingfield's tacit authority, an awareness of his inherited right to which communicated itself to the A P.M.

"Certainly, we'll wait downstairs, sir," said the A P.M. "I'm sorry to have to do this. But orders of course . . ."

"That's all right, sir. And I'm much obliged to you. Will you have a spot of coffee?"

"A spot of coffee sounds good. Thanks very much, sir."

When they were alone Lingfield asked John not to waste his attention on rage, but to listen carefully.

"Carry on," John told him, "but I want to punch somebody's head."

"First of all, here are the keys of my safe. There's

very little A stuff waiting to be put in order, but I was expecting an important man back from Sofia the day after to-morrow. You'll have to get his stuff off and incidentally send a report to those bastards who've staged this counter-attack All's fair in love and war, and Wicksteed's deep in both You can trust Stavro with your life He may seem a surly sort of a chap, but he's a diamond Damn it, I wish I could have seen him before I left "

"Can't you ?"

"No, he won't be back from a job till to-morrow afternoon But wait a minute. I'll scribble him a note for you to give him "

Lingfield took out his fountain-pen Stavro Priphtes was a highlander from the Northern Epirus, a grim mountainy man with a great moustache like an ebony bow. He was Lingfield's right hand and could serve but one master at a time John wondered if this written behest would bring him the service he had given to Lingfield

"There you are, give that to Stavro He won't let you down. You can consult him about anything: money, men, places, anything you like. A diamond, Ogilvie A diamond of the first water Now in case I can't communicate with Manners or Spicer, you'd better telegraph direct to Spicer and repeat the telegram Don't forget our consulate people here are entirely on the side of the military. But they must accept your telegrams until they get orders from the F O not to Tell Spicer I shall await his instructions care of the Legation, Athens, and shall stay there until I hear from him where I'm to go Blast those bastards! And they would choose a night like this to make me leave! Oh well, perhaps I shall have spewed up my bile before I reach the Piræus Just as well Loose bile isn't good for the soul Of course, we don't know yet whether you'll be allowed to carry on here, but make a fight for it, old man. Don't ask to be

sent elsewhere Remember that's just what the swine want. We'll hear in due course what the complaint is against me They can't take a high-handed action like this without giving some reason for it But stick it out as long as you can That's the best way of striking a blow for me And you'll get on famously. I'll take my cypher with me, but you'd better not communicate with me till you hear from Spicer My god, listen to the bloody wind! I shall cat my heart out to-morrow if it doesn't go down. Decent lad, that A P M I must get my packing done now. I'll take a thousand drachmas to carry on with There's plenty of cash in the safe "

"I shall sack Dawson to-morrow," said John savagely

"He's quite a good typist, you know "

"I'd sooner sit up all night typing myself than keep that weedy little tick in the place "

"You'll find it a job to get another typist "

"I shall ask Spicer to send me one I won't keep him Let Wicksteed find him a job "

In a quarter of an hour Lingfield had finished his packing and announced he was ready to go

"You don't mind if we drive down to the quay, sir?" he asked the A P M

"If we can all squash in, sir. That's all right with me "

"I telephoned for our car "

"I'm afraid I'll have to leave one of my men aboard till the *Thessalia* sails," the A P M said in embarrassment

"I understand that," Lingfield replied "Well, good-bye, Ogilvie. Thanks very much for the way you've fitted in with this little show "

"Surely I can come down to the boat and see you off?"

"I'd rather you didn't It only means talking round and round the same thing And I'd like that telegram to go off to Captain Spicer first thing in the morning So long, old man, we'll probably meet again on this roundabout." He turned to the A.P.M "I'm ready, sir, if you are "

The Four Winds of Love

"I'm quite ready, sir. Carry Mr Lingfield's case out to the car, Hewitson "

One of the military police picked up the case, and a moment or two later the house was silent except for the wind from Thrace thundering over the city

Presently John sat down to encypher the following telegram

Personal for Captain W. Spicer

To-night at ten o'clock A.P M with orders from H Q. escorted Lingfield to S S. Thessalia under arrest and notified him he would not be allowed to return to Salonica stop Lingfield will await your instructions through British Legation Athens stop

I am carrying on with A and B work pending instructions from you but hope you can send another man as soon as possible because B work heavier all the time stop Also please send confidential typist urgently because present typist Dawson has been dismissed for dishonesty stop Full report of this business follows by bag
Ogilvie

Repeated to CYPRUS

Two days later Ogilvie received a reply from Captain Wade

To be decyphered by Lieutenant-Commander Ogilvie personally.

I am sending Lieutenant Yarrow to take over A work under your orders. You have been promoted to Lieutenant-Commander which will strengthen your position. I am anxious to maintain Spicer Bureau in Salonica and rely on you to do everything to assist Lingfield will handle work in Athens with rank as Lieutenant-Commander R N V R Yarrow will bring confidential typist you require Communicate in future with London and do not repeat telegrams to Cyprus.

Wade

John felt that this reply was as satisfactory as could be expected. He wondered what kind of a colleague Yarrow would be. Yarrow unvisited! He wondered too what would be the reaction in military circles to Yarrow's appointment. He was wondering this when the Major arrived at the Bureau

"Good morning, Ogilvie. I understand you have been appointed head of this—er—organization?"

"That is so, Wicksteed "

"And promoted! Congratulations "

"Thanks."

"Well, we're anxious to work in harmony with you, and I see no reason why we shouldn't work in harmony. Lingfield was . . ."

"Look here, Wicksteed," John cut in, "harmony will turn at once to discord if you criticize Lingfield directly or indirectly. We'd better be clear about that from the start. I shall say nothing about the way he was outed so long as you keep off the subject. You've lost the finest man in the Eastern Mediterranean. Neither I nor the new man who's coming out here can hope to equal his work for a long time, if ever. By the way, I've sacked Dawson, and if I hear of any attempts to get at the new clerk who's coming out, I shall ask for leave to take the matter to London. Now I've said all the rude things I have to say. And here's a report from Number 22 who got back last night. There's some pretty good stuff in it, I think, but please remember I'm not an expert on this front "

"By the way Miss Harper is probably coming back," said the Major.

John stared at him.

"What?"

"Miss Harper is probably coming back "

"Well, God help her if she starts sending any more stuff to Heinrich Wahl," John exclaimed "Perhaps you also know that Lieutenant-Commander Lingfield has been appointed as Captain Spicer's representative in Athens?"

"We have been notified accordingly," the Major grunted "But he is not to put foot in Salonica".

"Well, that's that," said John Then he laughed

"What is the joke, may I enquire?"

"There's no particular joke, but I think the only thing to do is to laugh All right, Wicksteed Call it a draw, and we'll start again "

"Do you know anything about this fellow who is coming out?"

"Only his name Yarrow "

"Well, I only hope he'll be a gentleman," said the Major gloomily

It was a day or two after this interview with Major Wicksteed that John heard his father had been made a judge The elevation was not unexpected, but when it became a fact John found it almost incredible Even his friendship with Sir William Hunter had not turned a judge into a domestic figure, and he was glad that the claims of active service prevented any meeting between his father and himself until both of them were used to the new dignity. He had found few letters in his life so hard to write as the letter of congratulation upon the new dignity. He was glad it had not arrived fifteen years earlier. He might have been tempted to run away to sea However, his letter apparently pleased Mr Justice Ogilvie, and he found his father's reply to it agreeably free from the humbug he had dreaded.

57 CHURCH ROW,
HAMPSTEAD
NW

March 30th 1916

My dear John,

I was glad to hear from you I think I've done the right thing There's a considerable monetary loss, but I have saved enough to make that unimportant. I hope I shall make a good judge, though there's always a danger

that a popular advocate of my type will lack the particular quality of mind the tradition of the Bench demands I shall do my best. And that's all I can promise.

I'm glad you are having an interesting time in Salonica, but your letter sounds as if the business were getting somewhat on your nerves. If you are anxious to be shifted let me have a line, and I will have a chat with Wade whom I often see at the club, which I'm now summoning up courage to frequent once more. The most depressing thing about being a judge is the way one's old acquaintances shun one. I never seem to find a neighbour at lunch now. One might suppose that all one's fellow-members expected to enter the dock one day.

Elise is delighted I did not refuse the judgeship. But naturally she has no awe of judges. Thank God, I'll add, because it helps me to get rid of my own self-consciousness. David is getting on well at Eton, and is now quite hopeful the war will last long enough for him to take part in it. Prudence and the worthy Peachey are in Worcestershire with her grandmother, reasonably secure we feel from Zeppelins. Time goes fast. It's hard to realize that it will soon be a year since we saw you. And by the way I hear you also have to be congratulated on promotion.

Your affectionate

A O

Yes, pleasantly free from humbug, John decided. The hypocrisy of ambition had been shed, but then no doubt a judgeship was as final as death, and nothing else was to be expected. Yet the Bench was not free from humbug and cant. It was too soon to credit his father with immunity.

The bag in which this letter arrived at Salonica was carried by Lieutenant James Douglas Yarrow, and by the same bag came from Adelphi Terrace a letter shedding light on the mystery of Grace Harper's return.

The Four Winds of Love

Dear Ogilvie,

I'm afraid you and Lingfield will have been thinking I have let you down over this business, but Yarrow, whom I think you will find a capital fellow to work with, will explain how difficult everything has been for me. It was a question of giving way over this Harper woman or having to remove the Bureau from Salonica, which I did not want to do if it could be avoided. I think you'll find yourself in a much better position now to deal with Skinner and the rest of them, and Lingfield will be extremely useful in Athens.

Yours ever,

H Mounsey Wade

After reading this John went up to Yarrow who was unpacking in Lingfield's old room

"I hear you have all the inside information" he began, and stopped, fascinated by the unusual collection of articles for active service which Yarrow was dipping deep into a large canvas hold-all to extract. A reflex camera. The original two heavy volumes of Doughty's *Wanderings in Arabia Deserta*. Several volumes dealing with the higher mathematics. Tolstoi's *War and Peace*. Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme*. Benjamin Constant's *Adolphe*. A uniform made of special khaki threaded with red to resist the rays of the sun. A flute. Various music for the flute mostly by Mozart. A chessboard and set of Staunton chessmen. A striped silver and crimson burnous. Two pairs of Moorish slippers. A dressing-gown of canary-yellow silk. Twelve boxes of lozenges made from extract of beef. Two bottles of Captain White's pickled pearl onions. A quantity of odd socks, boots, shirts and ties. A large box of pastels. A drawing-board. A telescope wrapped up in woollen drawers. A microscope wrapped up in woollen drawers. Two bottles of Italian vermouth. A Gieve waistcoat for inflating in the water.

A patent hammock. A Primus stove wrapped up in a woollen vest A very large bottle of ink wrapped up in a woollen vest. A small post-impressionist painting representing as far as John could make out two banana skins on a marble-topped table A black greatcoat with astrakhan collar and cuffs A compass A sextant

Quain's *Dictionary of Medicine*, Donne's *Sermons*, Giles's *History of Chinese Literature*, the cap which belonged to the scarlet-threaded khaki uniform, and two left-footed boots which did not appear to belong to any right-footed boots already extracted from the hold-all were the last objects to appear.

Yarrow himself was thin and short-sighted, wearing sometimes a monocle, sometimes a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles He had dark untidy hair, a good complexion, a small, beautifully cut mouth, sensitive hands with long fingers the nails of which were bitten to the quick, and the round shoulders of a student But thus to catalogue his features was not to portray his charm John loved him from the moment they met

"That's a remarkable collection," he said, gazing at Lingfield's former room strewn with the contents of Yarrow's hold-all.

"Yes, I'm going to work at the flute when I have any spare time. I'd rather have worked at the oboe, but they say it's too difficult, and more chamber music has been written for the flute "

"Come on down when you've finished unpacking," John asked him, "and tell me about this Grace Harper business "

"I *have* finished unpacking."

"You're not going to put those things away anywhere?"

"Where can I put them unless I put them back in the hold-all? It'll be easier to find what I want if I leave them on the floor."

"Yes, I suppose it will," John agreed, "as long as you don't mind having your room in such a mess "

"I've a theory that people waste a lot of time in putting things away," said Yarrow "In fact I once worked it out I forget the exact figures, but I think if a man lived to seventy, and leaving out the first fifteen years of his life when he was compelled to be tidy against his will, I reckoned that he spent exactly one year doing nothing else except tidying up. That's too much, you know "

Coffee was brought into the sitting-room

"This Grace Harper creature travelled with me from London," Yarrow told John

"I haven't met her," he said "But she doesn't attract me from a distance Did she try to fascinate you?"

"No, there was an Admiralty messenger travelling at the same time, and as he had a reserved compartment she attached herself to him You know how she got back to Salonica? No? Well, she didn't waste any time with the partially powerful She wrote and asked Mr X— Y— to give her an interview "

"But surely he didn't?" John gasped.

"He did indeed She had a letter from the head mandarins here to the War Office, and some high-up mandarin there pulled the wires, with the result she interviewed Mr X— Y— himself and spun such a convincing yarn that her case was investigated and all the people who want to put old Wade out of business had a grand time Luckily your father was made a judge, and Wade managed to get you promoted and kept on here "

"Sacrificing Lingfield!" John exclaimed indignantly.

"He couldn't do anything else There was a terrific outburst of chivalry among the brass hats over the way he had blackened a poor pure woman's character "

"But she'd sleep with anybody if it suited her game!"

"That's what the Admiralty messenger discovered," Yarrow said

"So, any blasted woman who is deported from Salonica and chooses to act outraged chastity to the heads in London can get away with it? No wonder they find this war too much for them "

"The fair Grace seems to possess a special fascination for the old and middle-aged "

"It makes one sick," John declared "Wade ought to have stuck out "

"Too many people thinking their bottoms fit his chair better than his own," Yarrow observed

"But this cursed war isn't a game of musical chairs," John expostulated

"Isn't it? Well, I hadn't thought of it before. But now you mention it I think that just about describes what the war is now outside the trenches I've got Lingfield's chair, and as I was bored to tears at Adelphi Terrace I'm not going to pretend much indignation How long do you think the war will last?"

"At this rate, till the end of next year at least "

"The end of next year? If it's finished by 1922 I shall be surprised This year will be taken up by getting Asquith out and either Carson or Bonar Law in 1917 will be taken up in the other getting out whichever of them gets in It'll be at least 1922 before everybody who thinks he ought to be Prime Minister has managed to get the job. On top of that there are the people who want to get Kitchener out, French out, and Jellicoe out, and as soon as they have been got out there'll be more intrigues. And that's only *our* people. What about the French and the Russians and the Italians? Remember we must finish the war with an advantage over our beloved Allies. Then we must beat the Germans, and that won't be too easy. In fact, they'd stand a very good chance of winning if they weren't just by a little the stupidest nation in Europe."

"I'm beginning to understand why you've brought all these books on the higher mathematics I wonder you didn't bring a bassoon as well as a flute You'll apparently have plenty of time to learn it "

"No chamber music for the bassoon," said Yarrow "But I'm going to work at Chinese I was walking to Pekin when war was declared "

"How far had you got?"

"Halfway between Damascus and Baghdad. I ought to have walked on and paid no attention. But one becomes self-consciously patriotic I enlisted "

"How did you manage about your eyes?"

"Beautifully, until I mistook the colonel for a recruit After that they chucked me out "

"I shall enjoy having you with me," John assured his new colleague

"Yes, I think we ought to shake them up a bit here," Yarrow agreed

Yarrow's expression of opinion looked like being justified when toward the end of April information from an officer of Venizelist sympathies on the Greek General Staff revealed that there had been a secret meeting at night between British staff officers, one of whom was Colonel Skinner, and Bulgarian staff officers to discuss the possibility of concluding a separate peace with Bulgaria at the expense of Greece.

"I don't know which is less effective," Yarrow observed "A politician trying to be a soldier, or a soldier trying to be a politician "

"A distinction without a difference so far as bloody foolishness is concerned," John replied. "But what do we do with this information?"

"Send it down to Lingfield in Athens," Yarrow suggested "And let him stir up the Legation to make a row."

John frowned

"I don't quite like doing that. If we're reduced to spying on the men responsible for the conduct of this campaign—of course, if they do any serious damage, it's another matter, but I'd rather not make trouble unless it's necessary—I mean, it is rather damnable."

Yarrow let fall his monocle and put on his horn-rimmed spectacles, a trick he had when the matter under discussion was seeming important.

"I think you should send in this report. You've no authority to communicate directly with the Legation?"

John shook his head.

"Then why not send it to Wade?"

"I might do that. He certainly wants all the ammunition we can give him. But it goes against the grain. . . Oh, well, I'll put the report in the safe and think it over," John decided.

Three days later John, staggered by the news of the Easter Rising in Dublin and by its suppression, wrote to Fitzgerald

May 2, 1916.

My dear Fitz,

I do not know yet if you are one of the patriots who have been taken, but I've a feeling that you must be, and I'm just writing a few words to tell you how much I envy you the chance you have had to try to do for Ireland what Wallace did for Scotland a long time ago. I can imagine no greater happiness for a man than to be given the opportunity to strike a blow at this humbug about the rights of small nations which is beginning to make this war a mockery of all that is decent in human nature. However, it wouldn't be seemly for me to criticize in a letter to one who must now be a declared enemy the way we are conducting this war. Anyway, I have the consolation of knowing that such criticism would apply

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only to the men at the head of it, and the bitterness of such criticism would be caused by the way that thousands of lives are being sacrificed to keep such men at the head of the war It's all too unutterably damnable I know that this rising has been suppressed, but you can count on Maxwell's taurine stupidity to win to your point of view the great mass of the Irish people God bless you, my dear Fitz If this war had made possible nothing except the Irish Rising it would have been justified, but I am hoping that before it is finished this war will have proved to every nation the glory of human liberty. Or are most men natural slaves? And will this enslaving war only leave them with a keener appetite for slavery? It's a bogey that sometimes haunts me I wish I could hear from your own lips all that has happened

If you write to me send your letter c/o the Foreign Office.

*Yours ever,
John Ogilvie*

A Zeppelin appeared over Salonica and was brought down by the fire of the ships, but John was considerably more disturbed to read in the Press news

Three signatories of the notice proclaiming the Irish Republic, P H Pearse, T MacDonagh, and T J Clarke, have been tried by Field Court Martial and sentenced to death The sentence having been duly confirmed the three above-mentioned men were shot this morning

And so day after day this bloody register of patriots in Ireland was spun out at the bidding of the general who had done as much as anybody to spin out the bloody register of patriots on the peninsula of Gallipoli, by that bull-necked big-nosed general who while in command in Egypt had fought so hard on paper to preserve his own importance by opposing the transfer of troops under his command to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

The mother of Padraic Pearse was accorded the grace of being sent for on the night of her elder son's death to say farewell to William, her second son, who was shot the following day James Connolly who had been severely wounded was not spared they carried him out on a stretcher to be shot Joseph Plunket was married in gaol on the night before his execution, and that was extolled as a shining act of mercy

"My God, Yarrow, I shall go mad presently and shoot one of the generals here," John cried "To hell with cant about Belgium, Poland, and Serbia! To hell with it, I say And to hell with England if the English let this cold-blooded butchery continue "

"Well, I can't say I care much for the Irish, but this is a bit steep," Yarrow agreed "The trouble is that the chief villain of the piece is apparently a Scotsman, and by his name a native of my own countryside "

"The rights of small nations! And Scotsmen playing jackals to the British Lion "

"Yes, it is a bit steep, especially when we remember that the lion was once an exclusively Scottish beast and that the English representatives of the large cats are three leopards "

"Can nothing be done? Listen to this from Asquith in the House of Commons

"So far as the great body of the insurgents is concerned I have no hesitation in saying in public that they conducted themselves with great humanity which contrasted very much to their advantage with some of the so-called civilized enemies with which we are fighting in Europe That admission I gladly make and the House will gladly hear it They were young men, often lads They were misled, almost unconsciously I believe, into this terrible business They fought very bravely and did not resort to outrage ,

"They fought very bravely," John went on "They

surrendered to save the people of Dublin further bloodshed, and they are to be butchered daily three at a time. I wrote to a friend of mine whose name I am expecting to see any day among the dead and said he could count on Maxwell's doing the stupid thing, but by God, I never anticipated such depths of brutal stupidity "

"In justice to my fellow Borderer his action must have been approved in London," Yarrow pointed out

"Oh yes, we must face up to that," John agreed

At last the executions stopped, and to John's relief without his seeing the name of Edward Fitzgerald among the martyrs

At the end of May John was sent for by Colonel Skinner. He supposed the summons was connected with the surrender of Fort Roupel by the Greeks, an action which had caused bitter indignation among the officers and troops who resented the pacific official attitude toward the Bulgarians. Colonel Skinner sat at his desk and regarded him gravely for a moment or two in silence

"I'm afraid I have some rather unpleasant news to communicate," said the Colonel at last. He was a horse-faced man, curiously resembling the equine badge on his uniform of the Loyal South Riding Regiment, commonly known as the Yorkshire Buffs

"More expulsions, sir?" John asked, with a smile

"No, no, Ogilvie, it's not *yet* a question of that. But you have committed a serious indiscretion. This letter " he held up the letter John had written to Edward Fitzgerald. "This letter was seized by the military authorities in Ireland, and I am desired to enquire what your motives were in writing it. It is addressed to a certain Doctor Fitzgerald at Tinoran, County Kerry. I take it you don't deny you wrote it?"

"Certainly not," said John. "What's the objection to the letter? And why hasn't it been delivered to Doctor Fitzgerald?"

"It has not been delivered because your—er—correspondent is at present in Dartmoor Prison, having been sentenced by Field Court Martial to penal servitude for life "

"For what?"

"For an active part in the Irish Rebellion He was condemned to death, but his sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life "

John felt the veins on both his temples ticking ever more insistently, but he tried to preserve his calm

"I was not aware when I wrote that letter of my friend's part in the rising," he said.

"You seemed fairly sure he would be found among the ranks of the rebels "

"I certainly didn't suppose he'd back out. I had no official knowledge of his part, and that being so I fail to understand why my letter was intercepted by the military authorities "

"I'm afraid you don't yet realize what a nasty position you're in The letter has been sent to me with several sentences underlined in red ink."

"Not blood?"

"What did you say?"

"I said, 'not blood?' "

"What d'ye mean?"

"Really, sir, I think the two words are not too long to be understood with the help of average intelligence "

"Are you trying to be insolent, Ogilvie? That's not going to help matters, you know. The sentences underlined are not proper expressions of opinion from an officer on active service Several sentences express sympathy with acts of high treason, and one sentence about General Maxwell is nothing less than a gross breach of discipline I recognize that you are not a regular soldier or—er—in your case sailor, but you've been granted a temporary commission as such, and while you hold that commission

you cannot expect to be exempt from the discipline it entails ”

“I do not consider the expression of a private opinion to a friend in a private letter involves any breach of discipline,” said John “If you think that it does, I shall welcome a court martial I’m getting rather tired of wasting my time and the nation’s money in Salonica ”

“Perhaps you’d like to go and fight for the Irish?” Colonel Skinner enquired with weighty sarcasm

“Yes, I should like very much to fight for the Irish,” John replied

“This is all rather extraordinary ”

“We’re living in extraordinary times, Colonel I consider my behaviour much less extraordinary than your behaviour and the behaviour of another British officer in meeting two Bulgarian officers on the night of April 21st in order to discuss the possibility of concluding a separate peace between Great Britain and Bulgaria by offering Bulgaria a large slice of Greek territory The details of that meeting are known to the Greek General Staff. The details of that meeting are liable to be published in the Greek Press whenever it suits the plans of the Greek General Staff, and it would not be surprising if they were published as a piece of propaganda to justify the surrender of Fort Roupel ”

“Where did you hear this strange story?” Colonel Skinner asked, making a grimace like a horse when the bit is put into its mouth

“That is my business, or rather the business of the Spicer Bureau It was in my power last month to hand that information to General Sarrail direct, or had I wished to be more discreet to send it down to Lingfield in Athens to make what use of it he saw fit ”

“You are apparently trying to threaten me ”

“Not at all I’ve merely introduced this matter to establish a standard for extraordinary behaviour,” John retorted. “Actually I’m not proposing to take any steps

about this information. If the story is published in the Greek Press you'll have to fight your own battles I'm not going to do anything which may get you into trouble At the same time I'm not going to listen to any jobation from you on the subject of my correspondence. If the military authorities at home desire to take official action let them do so Is there anything else you want to talk about—anything I mean that has some bearing on my job out here?"

"You're taking a very extraordinary line, Ogilvie "

"I've already told you, Colonel, that the extraordinary is no longer capable of impressing me Do I get this letter back, or do you keep it, or does the War Office want to frame it?"

"The letter has been seized by the authorities," said Colonel Skinner petulantly

"Then there's nothing more to discuss I suppose Wicksteed will be round sometime to-day. I've some interesting stuff for him. A good agent of ours got back last night "

Nothing more was said about the letter to Fitzgerald, but Wicksteed warned John that the defiant attitude he had taken up toward Colonel Skinner had done him and the Bureau no good

"Done me no good, Wicksteed?" John echoed in exasperation "If you mean it will stop my getting some decoration, do please get into your head and into the head of Colonel Skinner that I do not give a twopenny damn for decorations Do you think I'm going to be a commissioner after the war?"

*c/o The Foreign Office
June 4. 1916*

My dearest Elise,

I've been owing you a letter for nearly three weeks, but the endless work in Salonica makes private letter writing difficult. I'm glad to hear that everybody

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at home is in good fettle. To-day is the Fourth of June (such a hot day here!) and I expect you'll be down at Eton with David. I hope Prudence has not eaten too many ices, if by chance she had the luck to go with you.

Will you be very kind and take a suitable opportunity to say something to my father about my friend Edward Fitzgerald who has been sentenced to penal servitude for life and is now, I understand, in that gloomy hell of Dartmoor. I am not writing to Mr Justice Ogilvie myself because I don't want to embarrass his sense of decency and order by a direct appeal over a matter he might feel trespassed upon his judicial position. But I have been shattered by the thought of what these Irish patriots are suffering, and it would be an immense relief to my mind if somebody like my father would impress on some of his political friends that the handling of the Easter Rising has horribly blotted the fame of England—and Scotland and Wales share the disgrace with England. The blood of these young men, of the unfortunate civilians in Dublin, and of the British troops who lost their lives is on the heads of the political leaders with whom my father was so long associated—as much upon the Liberals as upon the Conservatives. And surely now that he has retired to the dispassionate atmosphere of the King's Bench he must recognize the criminal folly of the last five years which has brought about the present situation. Naturally, I do not expect him to make any kind of public protest, but I want you to let him know that if I had not been caught up in the machinery of this war I should most certainly have volunteered my services to Ireland and that by this time I might easily have been dead or sentenced to penal servitude for life in Dartmoor. And if he will ask himself what his feelings would have been in that case he will understand the kind of way I want him to look at this ghastly business.

I believe that the courageous expression of sane private

opinion in this time of ours abandoned to lunacy is the only antidote to the poison that is running through mankind I was heartened by a letter of Bernard Shaw's in the Daily News in which he showed with infrangible logic the iniquity of our behaviour. But Shaw is regarded as an intellectual extravagant, and though his letter honours himself it will have no influence What is wanted is courage from decent men in responsible positions Do try, dearest Elise, to make my father see what the ultimate effect of our atrocious treatment of Ireland will inevitably be on the two countries, and do try at the same time to make him see his own share of responsibility for what has happened already and for what are likely to be the much worse things that will happen.

Forgive this demand on your affection. You must imagine the mental agony I suffer here not merely from my forced inaction but from my silence. I can write nothing in defence of these men I esteem above all for what they have done I had some hope of provoking a court martial and thus possibly escaping from what has now become the imprisonment of uniform, but I fear that my openly avowed contempt for certain aspects of military behaviour out here defeats its own object. They will only take action against those they feel are afraid of them. I find the lack of moral courage in so many excellent soldiers no compensation for their bravery on the field If a gentleman now means a man who is afraid to think for himself and still more afraid to express a difference of opinion, then gentlemen are as unfitted for modern life as some button-headed plesiosaurus and we must give up the ideal as something effete and discover a new ideal for our particular civilization

I am writing to you sick at heart. But my head is still clear enough. Try to think yourself out of this present and into the future. Posterity will not praise our treatment of Ireland. To posterity we shall seem blind cruel fools After writing that, I wonder! The self-righteousness of

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English propaganda has shown no mercy over the centuries to anybody that fought the Elizabeth-cum-Cecil theory of government

I shall say nothing about my work out here, for it would be like relating the details of some nightmare farce. You'll know if anything can be done to make my father consider the possibility that we are wrong, wrong, wrong about Ireland.

My love to everybody,
John

Elise Ogilvie read this letter, sitting under the shade of the big catalpa in the garden at the back of 57 Church Row. It was a fine morning of mid-June and the faint sounds of the traffic in Heath Street enhanced her sense of seclusion from the turbulent world. Yet secluded physically though she might feel in the well-being of such azure weather she was apprehensively aware of that turbulent world. David would be fifteen next September. David would be eighteen in September 1919. And the war might easily last till then. Oh, surely surely it was impossible to prolong this agony as far as that?

John was right when he blamed party politicians for the Irish business, and if the war should last long enough to send David into the trenches would she not feel a bitterness about party politicians exceeding his?

That night after dinner she said to her husband.

"Alec, this Irish business. Can nothing be done?"

The judge looked up from his coffee, grey eyebrows arched in a question.

"Can we set no example of giving peace to one of those small nations for whose rights we are supposed to be fighting this horrible war?" she continued.

"I think the Government has the situation well in hand now."

"Alec! Alec! For heaven's sake don't sit there and talk

platitudes," she burst out "If you do think that, you've never given the problem a moment's real thought. But I'll pay you the compliment of believing you *don't* think that. You must know in your heart that our treatment of Ireland gives the lie to every ideal for which we have proclaimed ourselves to be fighting. Do you think I'll want to hear the Government has the situation well in hand when David is lying dead in France?"

"My dear, what are you talking about? The Government is not intending to conscript schoolboys."

"David will be liable to conscription in 1919. The war may last for another three years."

"Oh, no, no," the judge assured her. "I do not give it another year. Between ourselves I hear of an offensive on a grand scale being prepared for this summer, and there is a general feeling of optimism. Poor Lord Kitchener's death was extremely sad, but there's no doubt it will make matters much easier for the Higher Command. He always insisted on taking too much on himself."

"Alec, did you read the verdict or whatever it's called of the Court Martial on that English captain who killed that unfortunate Irishman Sheehy Skeffington?"

"I saw he was found guilty but insane," said the judge.

"And did it not occur to you that the verdict of posterity on our shooting of these young Irish poets will be 'guilty but insane'?" his wife asked.

"My dear, you seem very much overwrought this evening. I did not know you had interested yourself in the Irish problem."

"I've just had an agonized letter from John. He did not write to you because . . . oh, let us be frank with one another, Alec . . . he did not write to you because he dreaded lest his father might show by his reception of the letter that he and his son were living in different worlds. So he asked me to talk to you about these Irish rebels now

in prison. One of them is a great friend of his—Edward Fitzgerald.”

“And what does he think I can do?”

She read him extracts from John’s letter.

“In some ways he has never grown up,” Sir Alexander said, shaking his head. “Yet in conversation at the club the other day with the man who is head of the queer business for which he is working I was given the gratifying news that he is considered perhaps the most capable officer they have. I hope he’s not going to spoil their good opinion by some blazing indiscretion. I should have thought that the experience he has already gained in this war would have taught him by now that we are fighting for our existence as a great power and that we cannot be stabbed in the back by Ireland without taking the necessary measures to guard against such a treacherous attack in the future. As you know, I was always a supporter of Home Rule, but between being a supporter of Home Rule and condoning this outrageous rebellion there is a wide gulf.”

“Dearest Alec, we won’t talk about it any more,” said his wife. “I realize you cannot appreciate the point of view which puts morality above law. I ought to have known that you would never have been made a judge if you could do that. Even darling old father could not do that. And I should be ashamed to be fretting about David when so many thousands of mothers all over Europe have already given their sons to death.”

“The weather is rather thundery to-night,” the judge observed.

“Oh yes, yes, Alec, when the barometer behaves itself no doubt I shall find it quite easy to be equable about the horrors of this time.”

She spoke in tones of weary irony, and then suddenly she said quietly

“Perhaps I ought to have married a younger man.”
Alexander Ogilvie flushed.

"You've never said that before, Elise," he murmured, a little tremulously

"You've never seemed so old before," she replied

"But what does John want me to do?" the judge asked
"What do *you* want me to do?"

"Alec, please, please let us talk no more about it. How can you do anything unless you feel indignation?"

"But you have as good as told me that you regretted marrying me. That's a cruel thing for a woman to say to a man over sixty."

"I didn't say I regretted marrying you. I thought you failed me at a moment of extreme emotion and I was afraid I had not made sufficient allowances for my being so much younger than yourself. I don't regret marrying you, but I suppose every woman at some time or other in her life longs for that rapture of unanimity which we call love."

She rose from her seat and putting an arm round his shoulder kissed him on the forehead.

"Don't worry yourself, my dear. The war kills something in all of us. It has even killed something in childhood, as your will see, Alec, when the children of this time grow up."

"And you are telling me that this war has killed your love for me?" Alexander Ogilvie asked.

"No, no, my dear. Not even the war can do that. Not even if it lasts long enough to kill David. Poor Alec, I'm afraid I'm being a very unbalanced wife for a judge. But don't tell me it's the weather, or I shall probably say something more to upset you."

c/o The Foreign Office

June 7th. 1916

My dear Mrs Fitzgerald,

I have been horrified to hear of the savage sentence passed on Edward, but I suppose one must be grateful that these slaughterers were stopped in time and that I am not writing to you about a dead man. I wrote

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to Edward himself, but the letter was intercepted by those bullet-dodgers who call themselves censors, and I suppose some clown among them will be reading my opinion of him and perhaps blotting out the reference Will you, if you are allowed to write to Edward, give him my love and eternal admiration and say that I did try to write to him? I do not for one moment suppose that he will be doomed to serve this monstrous sentence, for I think sanity will return to the people running our country or if not that at the end of the war they will be kicked out on the rubbish heap of history by better men

I have never met your daughter-in-law, but will you give her my sympathy and tell her how proud she must be of her husband? Rather a silly message that, because I'm sure she has no need of being told by me that she should be proud of him.

I wish I could see you and tell you in person how deeply I have been moved by the spectacle of a smouldering nationhood bursting into glorious flame There is nobody here with whom I can share my enthusiasm, and the unscrupulous skill of the propaganda against Ireland is difficult to contend with There are moments when I feel I shall go mad from so much contact with stupidity, and the particular theatre of the war in which I am playing my part is exasperating in its futility However, I hope I shall be able to devote my energy to something less futile soon At the moment I feel as much in prison as poor Edward himself God bless you Perhaps it will be wiser for you not to write to me If I hear that any more of my letters have been stopped I shall become violent, and violence would be very ineffective where I am.

Your affectionate

John Ogilvie

The green waters of Caragh nagged the gravel strand below a grey tree-scattered slope at the top of which stood

a house covered with stucco that the damp of the south-west had stained to the semblance of a faded panorama. It was a cloudy day at June's end when Mrs Fitzgerald received this letter from her son's friend. She did not find it a heartening communication, because the censor had dabbed his ink over the pages and blotted out all but a few words. Indeed all that was left was.

My dear Mrs Fitzgerald,

I have never met your daughter-in-law, but will you give her God bless you. Perhaps it will be wiser for you not to write to me.

*Your affectionate
John Ogilvie*

"It will have been about Edward," said Nora Fitzgerald, a crimson-cheeked black-haired Irish girl with eyes like the waters of Caragh on a day of hazy blue. "He has not forgotten his friend."

"He would never forget him, astore," her mother-in-law murmured, her own pale eyes seeking angels in the folds of the shadowy hills that brooded over the lake.

The two women were silent. The grey waters of Caragh lapped and fretted the gravel strand below the green tree-scattered slope. The knotted white fingers of the older woman closed upon her rosary, which made a clicking like a dry twig upon a window-pane. She was praying for her son imprisoned over the sea in England, for her dead husband, for John she knew not where, for her unborn grandchild, for Ireland, and for peace.

A squirrel swung from the bough of a pine to the bough of an adjacent oak. The warmth of his auburn fur was like an assurance of life to those who thought of death in

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this lush greenery beside the grey waters of the lake, beneath the brooding circumambient hills, beneath the monotone of the clouds. The sight of his throbbing shape was like a sign that the prayer was heard.

*c/o British Consulate-General,
Salonica*

June 30th 1916

Dear Wacey,

Many thanks for your letter so full of news about Citrano, which was beginning to seem like some place I had dreamt of and only thought I had really visited. The Torre Saracena sounds exactly what I hoped it would be. I'm enormously grateful to you for taking so much trouble with my future home. My future home? At the moment I feel it is a future of infinite remoteness. We no longer ask when the war will end, but if it will ever end. I have given instructions to pay into your account at the Credito Italiano the sum of 5,000 liras, which will pay the gardener and his caretaking wife and buy some shrubs and things for autumn planting.

I'm having an extremely interesting time here and ought not to complain, but there are moments when I wish it was June two years ago and we had not heard of the assassination of the Archduke and indeed that we had never heard of it. Will it ever be the same again even at Citrano? I expect you have it pretty hot by now, but you haven't bugs and you haven't the mingled smell of musk and perspiration and you haven't the din and clatter of the Salonica streets. However, when I think of the poor devils in the trenches I feel a rotter to be grumbling. What fun if I could get enough leave to take a peep at Citrano, but there's no chance of that. We live in a fever of work, the result of most of which adds to the delirium of war.

Give my best love to Athene and Arthur Gilmer who

*will have whiskers by the time this war is finished
The photographs of the Tower are stuck up on the wall
opposite my desk like mannée idols. Tante buone cose.*

Yours ever,

J. P. O.

*P.S Yes, it was my father who was made a judge,
tell Mrs Heighington. Oddly enough 'Judge' was my
nickname at school*

"Why, I think John in uniform looks like love's young dream," said Athene Langridge

She and Wacey were sitting under the last of the roses on the terrace of the Villa Allegra. The outspread Tyrranian shimmered before them. The green tiles of the *duomo* glittered. The cicadas rasped upon the still air of noon. On the horn of the western promontory John's Tower, renewed and furnished, waited for its owner.

Wacey eyed the snapshot of John, which the Italian censor had decided would not imperil the success of the Allied arms.

"If we have to take a hand in this business I shall try to get into the United States Flying-Corps," Wacey announced.

And an observer might have been faintly puzzled by the enthusiasm with which Athene encouraged such a project. True, there was at this date no sign of America's entering the war, but nevertheless . . .

"I must get along and finish my book," Wacey declared

"Yes, dear, you've been working at it for two years now," she reminded him

He looked at her with a sudden suspicion she was being sarcastic. Then he rose from the deck-chair in which he was lolling and leant over to kiss her. She patted her hair

"Isn't it just a little hot for so much affection, dear?" she asked.

"Athene, have you ever loved me?" he exclaimed

"And it's certainly too hot to answer foolish questions," she said firmly

He blinked She never had answered that question directly.

c/o The Foreign Office
July 3 16.

Dear Julius,

Over four months since I heard from you, but I can't bring myself to write many letters apart from those I have to write So forgive me And another thing is that it's impossible to write much to a neutral country about what I'm doing Salonica is my present place, but how long I shall be here I don't know I've not seen Emil since last October He's still Vice-Consul in Icaros.

How remote you seem in California! I picture you and Leonora and the infant Sebastian like Oberon and Titania and Puck among eternal flowers in weather that is never too hot and never too cold and never too wet and never too dry My not writing did not mean that I was not excited and glad to hear of the success you had with your First Symphony. The American notices you sent struck me as more intelligent than the usual musical criticism you get in England I wish they'd record some decent music for the gramophone What fun if I could hear your symphony on records! They do singing so well it seems a pity that anything in the way of orchestral music is so awful. I wonder if it will ever improve? It seems to me that the most damaging accusation to be made against the mechanization of the arts is the way such mechanization shows up the fundamental hatred of art among the public. Think of the gramophone and the films, of what they might have achieved and of what they have achieved.

Well, one day we shall meet again, I hope It must

have been a great joy to you when Leonora was received into the Catholic Church. But I'll have to be honest and admit that religion seems farther away from me even than California. I try to believe that this experience in Salonica is providing me with a store of emotion which will one day be recollected in tranquillity, but I'm beginning to doubt it. I'm inclined to think that modern war is as inimical to art as all the rest of modernity, and I doubt if any of it can be transmuted into art. However, that theory must wait for the test of time. I'll babble on no longer. My love to Leonora and tell her I heard last month from Wacey Langridge that the Tower is waiting for me and that I dream of sitting with her and you on the roof and drinking wine under the moon when the war is over.

*Yours always,
John*

Yes, I dream sometimes we are sitting on the top of my Tower and listening to the melodies of Chopin floating out from the windows of the library below. All very luscious, but lusciousness of sound is what one craves out here, which is like being swung around eternally in a farmer's rattle. Oh, what a long long way away you both are!

"Poor John, he doesn't seem happy, Julius," Leonora sighed.

They were lolling on the striped orange-and-white canvas of two deck-chairs beside the Pacific Ocean. Sebastian was asleep in his perambulator shaded against the sun by the branches of a Monterey pine.

"He's bored," Julius said. "It's all lasting too long. If he had gone riding into Constantinople and the war had come to an end in a blaze of accomplishment before last Christmas, he would have called it the grandest experience of his life. There were moments at first when

I felt I was missing something by staying over here. But I am glad now I had the courage to do so. The need to justify my inaction was the spur I required. But look here, Leonora, we must get away from the sea. The booming of this surf is most discouraging to mortal music. What drums can compete with it?"

"We shall be in the heart of the Middle West in the Fall when you start your concerts again. And shan't I long for California then?"

"So shall I, and that's what I need. I half believe that the original inspiration of music in the mind of man was his desire to return to the primeval ooze. Such a belief has more justification than this psychological bosh about the desire in all of us to creep back into the effortless warmth and darkness of the womb on account of a remembered amniotic peace in the depths of the Unconscious. It's certainly true that living in the heart of Europe and the heart of America and perhaps still more so the heart of Asia draws the music out of one in a desperate endeavour to escape from the melancholy of the apparently endless land around. One day we'll go to the Pampas. What *adagios* I might write with such horizons!"

She put out her hand and took his.

"Julius sweet, I'm so glad you and I are married," she murmured. "You won't grow tired of me, will you?"

"Why should I grow tired of you? I'm not looking for another woman, because I'm never likely to find another woman to be what you are."

"I'll grow old."

"So shall I."

"Ah, but not so quickly. Creative artists are always young. Listen, Julius sweet, if you do find one day that I'm too old for you, just tell me that and I'll set you free so that you can find somebody younger than me."

"Yes, I'll tell you when that happens," he promised, so solemnly that she saw he was laughing.

"But I'm serious, Julius. I really am. I couldn't bear to think people were saying your wife was standing in the way of your development as an artist."

"Leonora, I married you because you were hard, and you married me because I was hard. Neither of us expected the other to melt. We married because each of our characters was a whetstone for the other. I'll demand plenty of sacrifices from you. Don't start looking for sacrifices I haven't asked you to make."

"But you aren't making any sacrifices for me?" she asked in abrupt suspicion.

"Not so much as a single crochet—either of music or of mind. Oh, I haven't told you yet that I have an idea for a double concerto for oboe and bassoon. Not a grand-scale work, but something in neo-Mozartian form."

"And am I the oboe, Julius?"

"Paradoxically, O girl, you are the oboe."

"But you must dedicate the concerto to John," she told him. "I wouldn't have been the oboe if he hadn't brought you out to New York four years ago."

Against the booming of the Pacific breakers she watched him tracing with a finger on the bright air a silent melody.

*The Spiceries,
Salonica
July 31 16.*

Dear Emil,

I'm sorry to hear of this tiresome amateur yachtsman who's trying to steal the Samaena from you. Surely the Vice-Admiral will be reasonable if you go and talk things over with him at Mudros. You mustn't be too angry with dear old Wade. The only thing he fears on earth is an admiral, and if the V A can't be won round

to see your point of view *Wade* will never fight him. It may be ridiculous that because a fellow has won a few yacht races at Cowes he should be supposed better able than you to dictate what use is to be made of the *Samaena* on the coast of Asia Minor, but if he has the *V A's* ear you'll find no support from *Adelphi Terrace*. So be tactful and suave. I'll never try to fight the Navy, and if you take my advice you won't try to fight it either. The Army's quite another matter. But even against the Army I fancy it's a losing battle we're fighting here. *Lingfield* writes from Athens that matters must come to a head soon between *Venizelos* and the King. The Royalists know they are bound to lose the Election we have demanded (and by the result of which we have promised to abide) unless they bring off some kind of coup d'état, and anything may happen. I have all sorts of plans for the future at the back of my mind, but which of them comes off will depend on the way things break here and in Athens.

Anyway, I'm getting tired of risking men's lives for military information which is no use because no use is made of it. Apparently the only reason why we are maintaining a force based on Salonica is to put a spoke in the wheel of the French who are suspected of large ambitions in the Near East. As you will understand, even if you do not sympathize, I've not felt at ease in mind or spirit since the Irish Rising, and by a process of emotional and moral substitution I am working hard to foment the revolutionary tendency among the *Venizelist* troops here. That's the only energy which keeps me happy. Luckily I am convinced that the best thing for us (the British I mean) is to help *Venizelos* assert himself. The French are trying to put the old gentleman into their pocket, but by what *Lingfield* tells me the old gentleman doesn't want to be put.

I've a delightful fellow working with me—one *J. D. Yarrow*—who preaches 'War and Peace' and

'La Chartreuse de Parme' as vital revelations of human nature in time of war. But so far I haven't brought myself to tackle either I'm so tired every night that I can't even read a chapter of 'Pride and Prejudice'

Don't let this Commander Halliwell R N V.R take the wind out of your sails.

*Yours ever,
John*

As Emil laid John's letter down on his desk in the white vaulted room of the Consulate in Icaros a tall, thin, clean-shaven man with a pointed nose and wearing a white naval uniform came in.

"Morning, Stern," he barked.

"Good morning "

"I'm sorry to be always lodging complaints, but Mrs Edwards has been round to see me, and I think these cattle-raids of yours on the mainland will have to stop. Apparently in that last raid you practically destroyed her father's farm "

"I'm afraid I'm busy this morning, Halliwell A bag from Salonica has just come in," said Emil coldly

"Yes, but this matter is urgent "

"I have not yet received orders either from the Minister in Athens or from the Vice-Admiral at Mudros that you have been empowered to interfere with my work in Icaros "

"The V A has sent me on a tour round all the islands with a view to co-ordinating the various work being carried on at present by semi-independent small intelligence organizations, and I'm afraid you'll have to toe the line. We expect to reach some arrangement with the French by which we make ourselves responsible for the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean. This submarine business is beginning to get serious If as we expect the Aegean is divided up into areas under various S N O's ..."

Emil yawned.

"I really haven't time this morning, Halliwell, to listen to dreams. At present I am responsible for the intelligence work in Icaros. When I'm informed that this is no longer so I shall give it up. But in either case I shall not be compelled to listen to you. Mr Withers, will you open the door for Commander Halliwell, please?"

Emil turned to the papers on his desk. The sharp-nosed amateur yachtsman who was a wealthy stock-broker in times of peace gaped, glared, and finally walked out of the Consulate.

"That damned Jew will find himself run out of here, if he's not careful," the Commander observed to the skipper of the motor-launch in which he was making his tour of the islands, nominally in the interest of co-ordination, but actually in the hope of subordination.

"Quite, sir," said the skipper of the M L, a young Lieutenant R N V.R., an amateur yachtsman with a proper respect for a senior officer who had won many famous races at home.

It did not look as if Emil's neglect of the advice John had offered him in his letter was going to make his future relations with the Navy very cordial. Still, even commanders in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve do not find it easy to run consuls out of consular posts, and the war declared that morning might well last as long as the larger war of which it was a minute emanation.

Withers from the door of the Consulate watched the amateur Commander swaggering along the quay. Through his yellowish teeth he whistled *Rule Britannia*.

*c/o The Foreign Office
August 25. 16.*

My dearest Miriam,

I have been laid up for a fortnight with a most objectionable fever attributed to the sandfly. The temper-

ature leaps up to a fantastic height. Mine went to 106° in an hour. Then after a brief but raging delirium it returns to normal, but within 24 hours leaps up again. The whole business is accompanied by excruciating pains in every joint and nerve of the body, to which the high fever is preferable. I am convalescent now, but not yet up, and as this may be the last chance I get for some time to write to you I'm taking advantage of it.

I find illness clarifies the mind. The lesson from one's delirium after it has passed is that the world is suffering from a fever at present and that bouts of delirium are recurrent in groups of people everywhere. Salonica has been delirious throughout this month, and the delirium has not yet passed. Briefly the facts are that Sarrail planned an offensive at the beginning of August to coincide with the entry of Roumania. Roumania did not come in, and the offensive was postponed for another week. Unfortunately when it started the Bulgarians and Germans had started theirs on the same day, and it was so much more effective than ours that by now Eastern Macedonia is overrun, and I doubt if the Greeks intend to offer any opposition to the occupation of Cavalla itself. In fact the whole business is a clever move by the Royalists to rob Venizelos of some sixty safe seats at the forthcoming Election.

Here, however, a sort of hysteria has set in, and it is commonly believed that the enemy will advance and drive us into the sea, marching onward south to give the King an excuse to enter the war on the side of the Central Powers. I do not for one moment believe in this larger plan, but rumour is busier even than usual and there's no doubt Sarrail is scared. Our people resent Sarrail so much that they would almost welcome his being overwhelmed by the enemy. It's an uncomfortable revelation of national jealousies, or perhaps it would be fairer to say of the jealousies of the Higher Commands. In Paris

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they dread a success for Sarrail in case he should aim at a military dictatorship At G H Q Chantilly they are as much afraid of his success as when G H Q was at St Omer they were afraid of a success by Ian Hamilton at Gallipoli. From London I hear the politicians are devoting most of their energy to manœuvring for personal advantage, and that the value of the various theatres of war or potential theatres of war lies in the use politicians can make of them, not to win a victory for the nation but to provide star turns for the political leaders How far this is exaggeration I do not know, but I'm afraid it is pretty near the naked truth.

Perhaps it is the reaction after this fever, but I am feeling at the moment in a state of despair about the world. When war came two years ago I was exultant. One had criticized England, principally, I think, because one had come to think of England in terms of party politicians and the popular Press, but when the country responded to that call from Belgium criticism was forgotten. All that monstrous exploitation of Ireland in the interest of party politics, all that hideous and brutal treatment of women over the agitation for the vote, every black memory vanished when we entered a war from motives as near to generosity as could be imagined. Oh, I dare say the heads used the Belgian business to drag in the mass of the people, but the people themselves believed absolutely in the complete disinterestedness of the action they took. There was a positive feeling of a crusade. The accusation of hypocrisy simply could not be made against the English people

After a time I got out to Gallipoli, and on that peninsula I learned not merely the courage and the decency and the endurance of the men we dump together under the name of Britons, but also the courage and the decency and endurance of the Australian and the New Zealander. To live at Anzac with death round the

corner was an ennobling experience, and although it was impossible to shut one's eyes to the fact that the lives and health of thousands were being sacrificed to the base jealousy, blind stupidity, incompetent cunning and mean ambition of the great ones at home both in England and in France—somehow all of it was impotent to spoil the grandeur of what men were doing at Gallipoli. We remember the 10,000 Athenians at Marathon, the 300 Spartans at Thermopylae. For us they are Hellas. And for posterity when it considers this war the men of Mons and Gallipoli and Mesopotamia will be Britain, not the great ones in Westminster and Whitehall and General Headquarters. All the while I was on the Peninsula I was conscious of being one with the valourous and the humble, and in that thought was a peace of mind which made the din and the dust, the flies and the odour of death, the foulness of dysentery, and the heartbreak of ineluctable failure appear as nothing, appear indeed positively beautiful and desirable. A portion of me, and I think the best of me, had become history.

Then the fortune of war took me to Icaros, and I could admire the skill and courage with which Emil was tackling his job to which never in his wildest dreams could he ever have supposed he should one day be called. I used to jeer at his lapse from revolutionary grace into the 'sin' of bureaucratic security, but I now realize that his entering the consular service had been a deliberate effort to discipline himself. And he is magnificently disciplined now. As calm and cool as a marble statue. You used to worry about his emotional development, and justly, because I do think that most abnormal people either come to grief intellectually and morally by a more complete surrender to their passions than the majority of normal people, or if they conquer them conquer them by a withering repression which withers themselves at the same time. Emil has thrust passion aside, or rather the ignominious

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aspect of it, but he has not dried up, and I shall be surprised if when the war is over he does not become one of the prominent rebuilders of a shattered world. He has used the discipline of the consular service in much the same way as I fancy Julius will use the discipline of the Catholic Church. By the way I wish I could hear this first symphony of his. He has been wise to keep out of the war. There is no music to be got out of something which only allows most men to keep their souls by offering them to death. And, Miriam, I know how hard it is to keep one's soul anywhere except under fire.

At first when I came to work in Salonica I was still rejoicing in this exultation of action. I still felt that active service of some kind or another was the only life worth living or giving. Gradually, however, the corruption of decent existence, into contact with which my job was always bringing me closer, began to prey upon my faith either in the practical value or the theoretical justice of what I was doing. One plunges into this kind of work with the enthusiasm of a hound following a scent, and it is only too late one wakes up and realizes by what devious and disreputable ways that scent has led one. Certainly, Emil is doing the same kind of work, but his is almost entirely what may be called the creative side of it. He induces men to risk their lives for information, but he frequently risks his own life at the same time. And the information he obtains has a definite value. His Gallipoli stuff was the best that came in, and his present work is useful. So is some of mine, but I only exercise a supervision over that side of our job. My immediate concern, alas, is with the worst of human activities. I do not care to be too specific even in a letter which is secure from censorship and will be delivered by hand to you from our own headquarters in London. However, when I tell you that since I came here I have even had to investigate occasionally the indiscretions of

British officers in their relations with Levantine male prostitutes you will understand what must be the sickening effect of such evidence of degradation. Then there are the indiscretions with women I have learned that the discretion of a man in bed with a woman is as little to be trusted as the discretion of a man too full of liquor 'In lecto veritas' is just as true as 'in vino veritas'

And then letters! I've now reached a point when a letter from one person to another is merely an object about which one debates whether it is better examined secretly or openly. The sanctity of private correspondence no longer exists. We are at war. All's fair! This atmosphere of eternal spying is unspeakably vile. I even had to get rid of one of our own confidential clerks because he was being paid, not by the enemy, but by a brother officer to spy on what we were doing. I mention two or three examples of the kind of disillusionment to which one is perpetually exposed, but you must remember that the process never for an hour abates. It begins at seven in the morning when I sit down at my desk and it continues till the early hours of the following morning every day and every night, every night and every day. Emil has an oval escutcheon of the Royal Arms in the Consulate at Icaros, on which the lion and the unicorn have been painted in a curiously elongated shape and with curiously insane expressions. The whole shield is like a distortion in some convex mirror, and it stands in my fancy as symbolical of the distortion wrought by war. I feel myself stretched out in a caricature of my mortal self, a fit subject for those two comic yet sinister beasts to preside over.

And in the middle of what was already becoming a nightmare experience as early as last April came the news of the Irish Rising, and the realization beyond any hope of blinking it that the brave talk about the rights of small nations was a mere war-cry and that when it ceased to

fit in with special cases it meant nothing, absolutely nothing My friend Edward Fitzgerald is now in Dartmoor serving a life sentence of penal servitude, lucky to be still alive and not lying in that hundred-foot-long grave which Maxwell is rumoured to have dug for the victims he intended to have shot two or three a day till his fright was allayed by the blood of young patriots That their sacrifice must restore their country to life will console their spirits if their spirits still live, but it does not absolve from guilt the country which murdered them But the horrible thing is that the average Englishman and Scotsman and Welshman approve of what has been done Their inability to see that the Irish Rising was from any point of view completely justified has been my sharpest disillusionment I did believe the rank and file of the nation were generous, but war has corrupted even that generosity And now we are faced with winning this war (or losing it) by driving conscripts to death, and the volunteers instead of being ashamed to fight beside conscripts gloat over the fact that the blighters have been called up instead of shirking at home

Am I mad? Hardly anybody agrees with me in despising conscription Fortunately I have found one or two to agree, and one of them is my colleague here, a most delightful fellow—James Yarrow—whom I look forward to introducing to you if the war ever ends and we are alive when it does If I am not mad, it is he who has saved my reason And when I think of the kind of man who might have been sent out to me! My late colleague was a broken ex-cavalry officer of over forty who for many years before the war had been living rather shadily in the Levant There was a great deal to admire in him, but I am glad he was moved on elsewhere. He had come to take evil for granted, and I still don't do that, though I'm bound to admit the intensive experience of the last nine months has numbed one side of me. I

write 'numbed' hopefully, but it may have killed it. I don't think it matters how cynical one becomes as long as one can continue to love one's fellow-men, but I don't love them as I did. Perhaps that is only a temporary state of mind

I am hoping now that Venizelos will make some dramatic gesture. It is lucky I have a cause in the sincerity of which I can believe, and in the hope of a revolution by the Liberals (the Greek Liberals, I mean, not ours!) I can preserve enough enthusiasm to make me want to be up from this bed and doing

I wonder if you'll find me much changed when we meet. I feel I hardly know the John Ogilvie who left England on a blue May morning last year. I look back at him as an ingenuous youth who with the help of a few charming women supposed he knew enough about life to write plays. Whether I ever write any more plays I know now a great deal about life, perhaps too much to write plays, or at any rate to write the kind of plays I should consider worth writing, and which nobody would want to see. A few charming women! I miss the society of women. Man without woman becomes as detestable in himself as in his surroundings. I suppose you'll call that a platitude, but as far as I can see mental development largely consists of discovering for oneself the truth of the great common-places 'We cannot touch pitch without being defiled.' One accepts that as a truism, and then one finds out for oneself how infernally true it is. I think back to those copy-book phrases one used to write out laboriously with thin nibs while the drawing-master banged one on the knuckles with a ruler to keep one pointing the pen away from one. That was all he cared about. The thickness of the down-stroke, the thinness of the up-stroke. I wonder if he ever realized how true it was that evil communications corrupted good manners.

But I was talking about the loss of women's society.

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You might retort I had not shown much sense of my loss, or I should have written to you more than once during the last year. But writing does not provide one with women's society any more than sitting in a box at the White Tower and standing drinks to Bucharest cabaret-singers. I wish I were driving up Fitzjohn's Avenue in a taxi and were going to pay you a visit. I think I should ask you not to talk for a while, but to play me some Schumann and perhaps one of Beethoven's early sonatas, and then we would talk.

I did have a chance to fall in love with a girl. She was a lovely Greek called Euphrosyne, but at that time I was still obsessed by the superiority of action over anything and everything. To fall in love seemed the most feeble kind of weakness. So I let the moment pass. What a relief to have somebody to whom I can write and assume that the young woman would immediately have fallen in love with me! Yes, I allowed the moment to pass, and I look back at her now not as the visible token of a missed influence but as the symbol of the true heart of Hellas. And then in Athens I met Rose Warburton. Perhaps it was seeing Rose after so many years which proved to me that I was definitely fourteen years older myself. Her husband is Military Attaché. He was badly wounded early in the war, and Rose has lost both her brothers. She was very sweet, but I don't think either of us could believe that once upon a time we had sat kissing each other on top of the world and then rolled clumsily down to the dead level of ordinary life like Jack and Jill. I saw a look of her mother in her. I wonder if you were right when you prophesied I might find life with Rose dull? You didn't put it quite so crudely, but that was what you meant. Well, even if I had married Rose I couldn't have lived happily ever afterwards, because the war would have come just the same, and I'd probably be a Captain in the Loamshire Territorials now, waiting

to be killed somewhere in France, if I weren't dead already

Well, dearest Miriam, I have not written to you for nearly a year, but I have written you a volume now. I shall get up to-morrow and perhaps something exciting will happen here, by which I don't mean an enemy air-raid. Oh, by the way I heard from my friend Langridge that my Tower is completely finished. That means you'll have to come and stay with me there when the war is over. I'm going to have a Seidelmayer Grand and sit on the roof in the moonlight and listen to Chopin. So be kind and practise all the *Études* and all the *Preludes* and all the *Waltzes* and all the *Nocturnes*. But I want no *Scherzos* or *Polonaises*, nothing but luscious dreamy music to charm the sea-green sirens combing their hair by the light of a golden moon. A lorry is rattling over the cobbles outside my window. My mosquito-net is keeping out the flies, but makes the heat even more unbearable. Still, I've no pain now, and the war must come to an end at last because there'll be no more paper on which to write reports. What a ghastly business that *Somme* massacre was, and all to no purpose! Write to me at the Foreign Office. The summer of 1900, and it's only sixteen years ago. Yet I could fancy Queen Anne was not yet dead when we were chasing butterflies at Fontainebleau.

My love and my thoughts,
John

Miriam Stern read this letter in that drawing-room where first she had met him who wrote it. His boyhood's presence was still with her, and though he was thinking himself the victim of age and war-weariness and excess of wisdom he had grown younger with every sentence he wrote. He would plunge from youth into eld, but he would never know middle-age.

She went to a bookshelf and took down a medical work to find out something about sandfly-fever, but could discover nothing. Was it perhaps dengue from which he had suffered? Should she have done more than she did to bring about a marriage between him and Rose? Would he have been happier now? Evidently there had been a faint doubt in his mind, but it must have passed. He would not otherwise have noticed that Rose was growing like her mother. And anyway what could she have done? That was not a match which the England of 1901 considered suitable. She hoped he would take care of himself after this fever. A waste of hope, for he was evidently not in the least likely to take care of himself. Yes, older in a way perhaps. Euphrosyne? A delicious name. He had not described her. She wished he could fall in love. It was what he needed now to restore the emotion drained from him by this incessant preoccupation with the activity of war. That was what he was missing. That female passivity which asked nothing from men except attention to itself, that feminine realism which proclaimed the futility of behaviour like war to take the world one step farther in the right direction. Miriam smiled. She was thinking of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. But the members of that deedy organization mostly did not think at all. They hopped about on the outskirts of the war like a chorus of schoolgirls at the annual prizegiving entertainment. They would grow up.

"I suppose I should be called useless in this crisis of humanity," she said to herself. "I have sewn nothing. I have served no coffee in a canteen. I have not tried to nurse. I have remained here thinking. Yet sane thinking is a form of prayer, and prayer is not to be despised. Already John begins to wonder why he was so much intoxicated by the notion of war."

She opened the lid of the Steinway and played the first movement of the Moonlight Sonata.

"Peace be with you, my dear, and with humanity," she murmured.

September 1st 1916

*From Lieutenant-Commander Ogilvie to
Captain Spicer*

Yesterday eight thousand of Cavalla garrison under Colonel Hatzopoulos surrendered to Germano-Bulgarians with all arms, guns, munitions and stores stop troops of Serres Division refused surrender and now retreating on Salonica to join revolutionary movement which has begun here stop other three divisions will be interned in Germany stop hoped here Venizelos will presently lead revolution stop reliably informed Germano-Bulgarian occupation of Eastern Macedonia negotiated by Greek Minister in Berlin under direction of King Constantine stop Salonica seething with excitement

Repeated to ATHENS

September 26th 1916

*From Lieutenant-Commander Lingfield to
Lieutenant-Commander Ogilvie*

At five a m this morning M. Venizelos and Admiral Coundouriotis left Old Phalerum in Hesperia for Crete to proclaim Provisional Government

Repeated to LONDON

September 28th 1916

*From Lieutenant-Commander Lingfield to
Lieutenant-Commander Ogilvie*

Enthusiastic reception of M. Venizelos and Admiral Coundouriotis in Canea Only one hundred people requested leave Crete for loyalty to King General Dangus left Athens this morning to join movement. Lieutenant Voulgaris in T B 14 marooned Admiral

Miaoulis on island Poros shooting quail and steamed off to join Venizelos This morning destroyer Thetis suspected of leaving Piræus was ordered to moor alongside Arethusa. Lieutenant on deck of Arethusa saw Thetis getting up steam and called through megaphone for reason. Lieutenant Vouvoulis commanding Thetis shouted back he was coming alongside but made for open sea at full steam Guns of Hydra and Arethusa hastily manned to fire on Thetis but I hoisted Blue Ensign on motor-boat and got in line of fire which caused hesitation and enabled Thetis to escape. Eight hundred officers and men including several of Royal Cretan Bodyguard will go Salonica on September thirty to join Provisional Government.

Repeated to LONDON

John was sitting in the little back-office of the Spicer Bureau when the porter came up to say that a Greek officer wished to speak to him, and a moment or two later Leonidas Ladas was shown in

"My dear friend, at last!" he exclaimed, seizing John's hand in a grip that touched ferocity in its expression of a purpose fulfilled. "What we have suffered first from the surrender of Fort Roupel and then for the horrible degradation of the surrender of Cavalla! But now we can atone "

There were tears in his eyes, and John, thinking of the selfless patriotism of these Greek officers and men who had flung away everything—homes, families, friends, and military career—for the sake of an ideal, found the tears springing to his own eyes God grant the star they followed might not prove a jack o'lantern leading them to destruction!

"How is your father? And your sisters, are they all right?"

"They are happy beyond anything you can think. They were quite mad with happiness. But Lipsia and the other islands in the Cyclades are not unanimous like Crete and the Anatolian islands. The arms of Germany and Austria and Turkey are still hanging over their consulates in Lipsia and that makes my father perfectly furious. But we are hoping that when the people see how Great Britain welcomes the Provisional Government of Venizelos we shall have no more nonsense in the Cyclades."

Yarrow came in just then, and John was amused to see the monocle drop from his eye when Leo shook hands with him.

"I'm so sorry," said the young crusader. "Did I squeeze too hard? I'm feeling so tremendously excited to be in Salonica. I wonder when we shall be able to have a go at these Bulgars?"

And then Wicksteed came in to have his hand wrung.

"Lieutenant Ladas wants to know when he will be able to have a go at the Bulgars, Major," Yarrow told him.

John frowned at Yarrow behind the Major's back, for he did not want the fervour of the young patriot to be damped thus early.

"Oh, you've come up from Athens, have you?" Wicksteed observed patronizingly. "Cavalry, eh? I thought the cavalry was almost solid for the King."

"Some of the officers of the cavalry are not like myself and my friends," Leo admitted stiffly. "There is a damned division of opinion in the country."

"You speak English remarkably well," observed the Major with added condescension.

"I ought to. I was at school in England for three years."

"Were you indeed? What school, may I enquire?"

"I was at Eton."

The Major gulped.

"Oh, well, then I can speak to you pretty frankly. You

mustn't be disappointed if you don't get into the front line at once. Your revolutionary movement has caused us a certain amount of embarrassment. You see, we've had no instructions yet from home what our attitude is to be."

"But, Major . . . but you're not telling me that we are not welcome here?" Leo asked, in consternation.

"Well, you see, it's rather forcing our hand. It was difficult enough when the Italians sent troops here. Factors, you know. There are so many factors in every situation."

"And so we have been fools to come?" Leo demanded.

"Not at all," John broke in. "Major Wicksteed represents the opinion of the Staff, and you know how cautious the Staff always is, Leo. They have to be, because they are always blamed for anything that goes wrong."

John could see how much chilled the young man's fervour was and did his best to convince him of the enthusiasm the news of the Venizelist effort would inspire in England. So anxious was he to reassure him that he succeeded in shocking Major Wicksteed, and when Leo had gone off to rejoin his companions the Major protested.

"Look here, Ogilvie, I don't want to make trouble, but I'm afraid I'll have to report your extraordinary indiscretion. You don't seem to realize that our line is to discourage all this revolutionary business, which we regard as a French manœuvre to force our hands."

"You mean to prevent your detaching the Bulgarians from the German alliance and concluding a separate peace?"

"Not at all. I mean to force our hands and make us agree to a big offensive on this front. You don't know so much as you think, I'm afraid."

"I know the attitude toward Sarraïl and toward Venizelos, and I don't agree with either," John retorted.

"I dare say, but unfortunately you are not running this

war, and that being the case you have nothing to do except follow out instructions. Colonel Skinner gave you clear instructions again only last week that you were not to establish any kind of contact with Venizelist officers. It is my duty to report that you are not following out those instructions. I should have thought you were tired of strafes by now."

"I've received no instructions from my own chief on this matter, and until I do I shall continue to act as I think best," John declared.

"In other words you propose to defy A H Q?"

"I warn you, Wicksteed, that if any attempt is made to imperil my freedom in the matter of communicating with Venizelist officers I shall send in a full report of the blazing indiscretion of various members of the Staff who discussed with Greek Royalist officers here the proposed offensive by General Sarraïl at the end of last month. That information was telegraphed from Athens to Berlin. We have the proof of it in correspondence captured by Lingfield from the German courier."

"So you're still spying on your senior officers?" Wicksteed snarled, his face darkening in a flush.

"You can't call it exactly spying when gentlemen undress in front of an open window looking down on Piccadilly."

The Major struck his boot a sharp blow with his cane, turned on his heel, and walked out of the room.

"Look out for squalls," said Yarrow.

"Yes, I'm going to shorten sail," John replied, sitting down at his desk.

Dear Captain Wade,

There is more trouble here now, this time over my attitude toward the revolutionary movement. I do not know if the official British attitude will be a refusal to recognize the Provisional Government, but until I

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receive orders from you I do not intend to be deterred by a few prejudiced Staff officers from doing all I can to help the Greek officers and men who have been goaded into open defiance of their own General Staff. Personally I do not see how we can refuse to follow the French lead and recognize the Provisional Government when the triumvirate reach here and formally proclaim its establishment. In any event I do not believe that your Bureau can do much more effective work here, and it seems to me more dignified to leave Salonica of our own accord than to be kicked out. It would be easy to raise a stink about the behaviour of various high up British officers here, but I'm sure you'll agree with me it is undesirable, because it's not fair on the army in the field, who whatever the intrigues at headquarters have had a rotten time without honour or glory and look like having a rotten time for months to come. And if we do raise a stink it will inevitably end in a compromise which won't allow the Bureau to function either efficiently or effectively.

If the whole of the Aegean should become the sphere of our Navy for the purpose of dealing with the submarine menace it will be essential to develop an organization for co-ordinating anti-submarine and contraband intelligence. Colonel Skinner has told me definitely that the military information we obtain for him is largely superfluous, and it seems ridiculous to waste money and risk lives in obtaining superfluous information. Whenever we get hold of a good man the military try to collar him. It's too much to contend with. I have reason to suppose the naval heads would look favourably on some arrangement which would place our organization at their service. After all most of our officers hold naval commissions. There may be insuperable objections at home to the course I am proposing, but on receipt of this letter will you, if you think fit, telegraph for me to come back to London at once so

that I can lay the whole position before you? Yarrow can carry on quietly here, and if he should be expelled before I get back I propose he should go to Volo and hang on there till I get back with definite plans

Our Government must soon make up its mind whether it intends to recognize the Provisional Government, and now arises another question

It is possible that King Constantine and his advisers will declare war on the Entente. The news from Roumania does not seem too good and if the Germans succeed in overwhelming Roumania, they might attempt an offensive on the Salonica front and get the Royalists to attack us in the rear. In that case it will be vital to arrange very soon for effective intelligence in Greece, and that we can do better than anybody

What between French ambitions and Italian ambitions in the Levant, the intensification of the German submarine offensive, the possibility of a massacre of non-combatant Venizelists followed by a declaration of war, and the complete stagnation of the Salonica front I feel that more useful work can be done almost anywhere than in Salonica.

Finally I think I ought to have a change, not so much for the sake of physical health as of mental refreshment, if I am to do my best work for you. That last go of fever has left me rather low. I could get to Malta when the King Alfred goes there to refit, and that would give me a chance to talk things over with Lingfield in Athens first. This letter should reach you by October 12th, and if you telegraph immediately I shall be able to get away.

Yours sincerely,

John Ogilvie

The telegram from Captain Spicer telling John to return to London as soon as possible was decyphered exactly half an hour before Wicksteed arrived at the Bureau with an

order that Lieutenant-Commander Ogilvie and Lieutenant Yarrow were to leave Salonica within forty-eight hours

"Too late, Wicksteed," said John. "I've already had instructions from London that I'm to return home immediately and that Yarrow is to go to Volo"

"To Volo? What's he going to do at Volo?"

"I think that's our business Volo is not within the Salonica Area of Operations"

"The car is to remain here," Wicksteed snapped.

"Not at all. The car goes with Yarrow," John replied

"But the General has approved our taking it over," Wicksteed argued

"The General is not aware of the telegram I have just received"

"That has no bearing on the disposal of the car"

"It has this much bearing on it, Wicksteed Our organization has been taken over by the Navy, and if you try to keep the car in Salonica I'll telegraph to the Admiral at Mudros and ask him to intervene Damn it, if you can't pinch a military car to take your friends joy-riding you're not going to pinch ours. Either you arrange that Yarrow leaves Salonica with the car and the safe and the office furniture, or I shall appeal to the Admiral. You may get the car in the end, but I'll stir up so much mud that *you'll* never be able to drive about in it You may think that the Grace Harper business is forgotten, but when I get back to London I'll damned well see that it's remembered again"

"Better call it a draw, Major," Yarrow murmured
"You've got rid of us, but you haven't collared the car"

And that was how the argument ended

"If an Admiral takes a General, what takes an Admiral?" Yarrow asked

"Only the Admiralty," John replied.

"And what takes the Admiralty?"

"Only God"

John had a couple of days in Athens before the *King Alfred* left Salamis for Malta. He dined on the first evening of his stay with the Warburtons who were still living at the Grande Bretagne Hotel, and found Warburton much more bitter against Venizelos than a year ago.

"The fellow's slippery. I don't trust him. This suggestion to recognize a revolutionary clique is scandalous. This talk about the King's planning to turn against us is bunkum. Pure bunkum! He has been hopelessly handled by our diplomatic people here. His policy is absolutely justified. He knows that if he came into the war we should let him down."

"As we look like letting down Venizelos," John suggested.

"We've never given Venizelos the slightest official encouragement," Warburton pointed out.

"I think that's arguable."

"Not at all. It's these confounded French. Impossible nation. They're backing Venizelos because they hope to establish themselves in the Levant after the war. It's that old mirage of Syria. Ever since we chucked them out of India they've tried to work against us both in the Near East and in the Far East."

"But Venizelos is much more anxious for us to back him. I think that's been clear from the beginning of the war."

"Let him want," Warburton snapped. "He's a demagogue. Every decent man in Greece is with the King, heart and soul."

John perceived that Warburton's prejudice against Venizelos was the prejudice of a Tory landowner against Mr Lloyd George. To him the hostility between Venizelos and the King was the hostility of class. His dislike of fighting beside the French was the dislike of an alliance with republicans. Warburton and many another of his kind were beginning to perceive that the war was releasing

social forces by which they might be overwhelmed. Germany had to be beaten, but the Warburtons were beginning to apprehend that in beating Germany they stood an unpleasant chance of beating themselves. John was caught up in a sudden surge of emotion from the crest of which he was aware of an immense abyss dividing humanity, and in that instant of vision he understood how superficial was the strife between nation and nation compared with the strife preparing between class and class.

"I believe in Venizelos," he affirmed, and in making that affirmation he realized that from now on for the rest of his life the fundamental inspiration of his political philosophy would be the well-being of the people at whatever cost to his other ideals.

Yet that was not the argument he used with Warburton now.

"The trouble with you Imperialists is that you've kept the desire to grab, but you've lost the power to grab in the grand style," he said. "Venizelos can give you the Levant if you give him the Greece of his dreams, but you're afraid to show your hand. Tell the French and the Italians now that the Mediterranean is as much your sea as theirs and you'll save yourselves an awful lot of trouble when the time comes to make peace."

"What interest have we in the Mediterranean any longer?" Warburton asked.

John stared.

"The old route to India was round the Cape," Warburton went on. "Let us keep out of the Mediterranean, which can never be anything except a threat to our prosperity, because if we base our security on our control of the Mediterranean we can never develop the Empire as it should be developed. We should be for ever tied to Europe. Think that over."

"You mean give up even the Suez Canal?"

"Gibraltar, Malta, and the Suez Canal. The imperial

route with modern transport is once again round the Cape," Warburton declared.

"Well, you've successfully staggered me," said John

"Unfortunately we've pledged ourselves not to make a separate peace. But if at this moment we could treat with Germany and offer, if they agreed to restore Belgium and give up to us their colonies in Africa, to withdraw from the war and let them fight it out with the French and Russians I believe we should be in an impregnable position, because Germany would take enough off both to recoup themselves for the loss of their African colonies. We should have taught them a lesson, and we could be good friends now. If we destroy Germany we shall destroy the greatest stabilizing force in Europe."

"To stabilize what?" John asked sharply.

"Democracy."

"I suppose by stabilization you mean what I should call repression?"

"Are you a Socialist?" Warburton asked.

"I think I shall be before this war is finished."

"Oh, John, no," Rose exclaimed suddenly intervening.

"They're such dreadful people."

"If I secured you an audience from the King would that help you to get the situation out here in some kind of focus before you go back to London?" Warburton asked.

John hesitated. Ought he to accept this offer? But suppose the personal influence of royalty which after all was still potent should be too strong for him, would not that make him despise himself later? And even if he were impervious to that influence, might not the fact of his having had that audience hamper his freedom of action? It would seem a kind of treachery to be granted such an audience and work against the man who granted it.

"No, I think I'd rather not," he replied.

The night after this dinner with the Warburtons John dined with Lingfield in his apartment at the top of a new

house at the end of a new street ending in the dusty wasteground dotted with the hovels of refugees upon which the city was fast encroaching Lingfield had a curiously shrunken look, and John asked if he was feeling ill

"Not exactly ill. Oh, I expect I'm tired after this blazing summer"

A gasolier with four incandescent mantles hung from the ceiling, the sickly illumination of which intensified the haggard appearance of his host

"I wonder they didn't put electric light in a new house," John observed, for even as late in the year as this the heat from the mantles was oppressive

"The fellow who built it probably bought this gasolier cheap and chose gas for that reason However, there aren't any bugs, and that's something for gratitude."

John felt guilty to be going home on leave when Lingfield was seeming to require a holiday more than himself

"Look here," he offered, "shall we telegraph to Wade and suggest your going back instead of me? I could carry on for you here."

Lingfield shook his head.

"My arguments won't have quite as much weight as yours What's vital if there is not to be a massacre here presently is recognition of the Provisional Government. Try to get that into their thick heads. Most of the Aegean Squadron has been lying at Salamis doing nothing since the first of September The submarines are getting bolder all the time. The Royalist majority—and there is a Royalist majority in Attica except at the Piræus—are planning a *coup d'état* which will be all the easier to carry out now that nearly all the Venizelist officers and men have gone north to Salonica. I hear too that one of those wandering amateur diplomats—a Frenchman this time—has

turned up and that the French are beginning to think they can come to terms with Tino. It's all bloody

"Ever since I put our motor-boat between the guns of the *Hydra* and the bolting *Thens* and helped her to get away I'm a marked man They've nearly got me three times this month You see, if they could put my lights out without anything more serious than an acrimonious correspondence and perhaps a formal apology it would buck up the resistance The Royalists think we're weakening all the time That blasted fellow Warburton has persuaded the Greek General Staff that nothing will influence our people to take any action against the King, and secure of that they've determined to seize the first chance of blotting out the Venizelists once and for ever. My information about what is going on is still fairly good, but nothing like as good as it was, because so many friends have gone north

"And I'm hellish tired. I've made such a putrid mess of my life, Ogilvie, that a bullet would be welcome In fact I'd go out and look for one if I thought it would help somebody at home to make up his mind that the situation out here really must be cleaned up "

When dinner was served by a refugee from Anatolia who looked like one of Macbeth's three witches, but who certainly knew how to cook, John noticed that Lingfield ate hardly a morsel, though he drank plentifully of the *retzinato* wine. He commented on his host's lack of appetite

"Appetite? I've had no appetite since the hot weather came "

"But it's gone now "

"So has my appetite," Lingfield replied, with a hollow laugh

"Look here," said John, "I'm going to wire on my own responsibility and shift Yarrow to Athens You want a reliable number two He won't get on your nerves I

guarantee that He diffuses an indolence which I found most restful. And you'll have Stavro Priphtes too, which I know you'll like."

"Oh, leave Yarrow where he is," Lingfield exclaimed fretfully. "I can't embark on another endless correspondence to explain why he is where he is."

"It'll be nothing to do with you. We won't tell London. I'll explain to Wade when I get back. You won't be bothered at all. Suppose you have a breakdown?"

"A what?" Lingfield asked suspiciously.

"Oh, I don't mean you're going off your head. But you might crock up. If you do, who's going to be responsible for what sounds to me a pretty complicated organization? If it were just a matter of intelligence work, it wouldn't matter; but as far as I can gather you're deeply involved in this Venizelist business, and I fancy what's worrying you most is the fear you have let a lot of people in and may let them down."

Lingfield who had risen from the table and was sprawling on a hideous sofa covered with a brownish-yellow figured velvet, his glass on the floor beside him, sat up.

"You're a good guesser, Ogilvie. I used not to mind letting people in for more than they bargained for, but lately . . . oh, I just see my life behind me as a mess and the rottenest mess of all piling up for the near future. All right, let me have Yarrow and Stavro. Perhaps I'm worrying about nothing. By the time you get back to London the situation may have cleared."

So a telegram was sent fetching Yarrow with the car and the safe to Athens, and John sailed in the *King Alfred* from Salamis to Malta.

The journey home was uneventful except for supper with Gabrielle after seeing her performance in a not particularly good play. She was still in the same apartment

overlooking the Parc Monceau Victorine was still her maid, but Aristide was driving a General at G Q G and Gabrielle had learnt to drive a car herself. It was not the light-green Panhard, however Its place had been taken by a smart little black-and-crimson Renault, easier for her to manage in the mournful streets of wartime Paris haunted by the bereaved figures of war in heavy crape

"Not a day older," he assured her.

She was wearing a full skirt with a pannier brocaded with a pattern of small birds and flowers in two shades of rose and green, a much shorter skirt than any he had noticed on his journey up through Europe

"And your highwayman's veil is charming," he added.

"My highwayman's veil?"

"It looks like that, just covering your eyes and nose and leaving the mouth free "

"The mouth free," she repeated, and on an impulse he caught her to him and kissed her

"*A la guerre comme à la guerre*," she murmured.

"As a matter of fact I haven't seen any service on that front," he told her, with a laugh.

"Is that quite true, *mon ami*?"

"Yes, it really is true "

But he could see she did not believe him.

"*Mais, tu as la Croix de Guerre*," she cried, noticing the red-barred green ribbon on his jacket "*Comme je suis contente!* How did you have it?"

"For no deed of valour, Gabrielle, but for avoiding squabbles with my French colleagues at Salonique."

"And that other decoration, what is that?"

"That is the Distinguished Service Cross "

"And that was for what?"

"For remaining alive at Gallipoli "

"Oh, I think you have done more than you pretend to me It is just an affectation which I know very well in these days."

John laughed.

"I'm not being modest Really, Gabrielle, I've done far far less than thousands, millions perhaps, who have not got a single ribbon."

She retired to her room and came back presently in a negligé of lace and *eau de nil* silk.

"Perhaps you are disappointed that I make you come to me for supper, John But I find the restaurants of Paris so melancholy. *Du reste*, I don't like to be seen much in public It is not the time for an actress to be making an exhibition of herself off the stage "

"I would infinitely rather be having supper with you *chez toi*," he assured her.

They talked about the petty gossip of the theatre, of the pettiness of which at such a crisis in the life of France Gabrielle made him understand she was fully aware. She had had two bad parts in succession. She had been offered a part in a new play to be produced next year in London, but felt that she ought not to abandon Paris. People might suppose she was insufficiently sensitive to the gravity of the time. They might even suppose she was going to London for greater security. She should almost certainly refuse the London offer. Besides, sentimental though it was, she did not wish to spoil the picture in her mind of London before the war.

"When you acted in *Annette*," John murmured

"What a wonderful memory you have, *mon cher*," she teased him, and in the note of that deep laugh of hers, faintly husky, he felt himself being carried swiftly back across the fateful years that stretched between him and the time when the hours in which he did not hear that laugh were empty.

"And I've never finished that play about Mary Queen of Scots. I wrote the first act, and then came the war, and I've written nothing since "

"Oh, my dear, I perfectly comprehend that. You are

looking older, John. But of course you were ridiculously young to look at when you had your first success "

"I'm feeling a good deal older. These last two years have crammed experience into me. But you don't look a day older, as I told you."

"An actress preoccupies herself with not looking older. It is an entirely superficial effect. Who is your love now, John?"

"I have no love now," he assured her earnestly. "I have had no love since you. That is the truth."

The big grey-green eyes opened wide to express consternation at such an incredible statement.

"Yes, the truth," he insisted. "I don't say that with the slightest idea of pleasing you. After all, unless I'd managed to fall in love with somebody within the year of parting with you there hasn't been much opportunity since."

She put her head on one side, regarding him.

"So it was not quite a brotherly kiss you gave me when you admired my veil?"

"You didn't think it was," he murmured.

The long façades of the empty streets had lost the bloom of dawn's twilight and stood out grey and stark under the monotone of a sky heavy with impending rain by the time John reached his hotel. An hour later he was in the train bound for Boulogne. At the stations past Abbeville drenched groups of men in khaki boarded the train for a few days' leave at home. Most of them were loaded with the heterogeneous souvenirs of active service. In spite of Gallipoli and Salonica they appeared to him figures in some unreal nightmare world, for the hours he had spent with Gabrielle were still obliterating the present, and between sleeping and waking in the railway-carriage his mind was back in the world before the war.

On the steamer he met a man who had been at Exeter

with him and whom he had not seen since. They talked about Oxford until the cliffs of Folkestone emerged from the rain like a row of dirty linen. This Gunner officer who had been a contemporary of his was met at Folkestone by his wife so that not a precious hour should be lost of the hours he had in England. John found a corner of a first-class compartment and went on with his dreams between sleeping and waking all the way to London.

Tea was in the drawing-room at 57 Church Row when he reached his father's house.

"Isn't it a rag father being a judge?" said Prudence.

"You lanky little brute," her brother jeered.

"Shut up, you ass, I'm growing."

"Is that what it is? I thought Miss Peachey had put you through a mangle."

"Oh, Mr Ogilvie—I mean Commander Ogilvie, what a suggestion!" Miss Peachey twittered.

Behind the back of her governess Prudence made the grimace of a huge but silent sigh for all that Miss Peachey represented in what she counted as human imbecility.

Lady Ogilvie frowned at her daughter, who grabbed a large slice of cake and flung herself down in an armchair in an attitude which caused her governess to point apprehensively at the amount of leg she was showing.

"David is in despair that he couldn't be here to greet you," Elise told John. "But he is counting on your going down to see him at Eton if you can possibly find the time."

"Mummy says I'm getting awfully like you, John," Prudence called from the depths of her chair. "Do you think I am?"

"That's a jolly piece of news to hear after being away from England for eighteen months, especially as I thought you looked rather like a pink blancmange which hadn't set."

"You beast!" Prudence shrieked, flinging a lump of cake at him which missed him by two yards and was

quickly devoured by her Aberdeen terrier, a recent acquisition

"You'd better join the Air Force," John advised

"Prudence, if you're going to behave rowdily you'll take the rest of your tea in the schoolroom," Lady Ogilvie told her daughter

"I'm sorry, mummy, but Bruce has licked up all the crumbs And you can't talk about a pink blancmange, John, because a blancmange is white I *have* learnt enough French to know that "

"You prefer pink-mange?"

"You *are* disgusting? He *is* disgusting, isn't he, mummy?"

"I think this excitability is rather getting on all our nerves," her mother observed, a little coldly

Prudence, exhaling a long sigh of one misunderstood and unappreciated, relapsed into silence

"You're a bit severe with Prudence," John told Elise when they were sitting in the drawing-room after tea, waiting for the Judge to come back from his club.

"I'm not really, John But poor Peachey, who is admirable in most ways, cannot succeed in holding her in. I suppose it will end in my giving way and sending her to school, which will mean a pattern I don't greatly care for."

"But you're fonder of David than Prudence?" he pressed.

"I don't think that's a fair question The extra fondness is only the inevitable extra fondness a mother has for a son It's a special kind of fondness which I don't believe any mother can give to a daughter. And Alec will give Prudence that special fondness he can't give to David, though I'm bound to say he's delightful with both of them He's more human since he became a judge. He's really making a desperate effort not to be a figure apart from ordinary life That's why he never loses an opportunity to spend an hour or so in his club. Before he went on

the Bench his emotion was satisfied by the sense of advocacy. I suppose it's the same kind of response that an actor or a preacher craves—the personal sway over one's fellow-men."

"I expect he misses that on the Bench," John said

"Yes, I'm sure he does. His sway there is the impersonal sway of the Law. So now he searches for what he has lost in social and domestic intercourse. I think you'll find him far more sympathetic than you've ever found him in your life. I shall be disappointed if you don't."

No doubt it was with this expectation in view that Elise went off early that night and left John with his father.

They sat on either side of the fire in the Judge's library, the windows of which, heavily curtained, looked out on the garden at the back. The silence after the almost incessant noise in which John had passed the last eighteen months was unearthly. He glanced across the blue smoke of the cigars at his father and there suddenly recurred to him the criticism his father had once made of the way he had tucked his white tie under the wings of that collar he had had built for himself by Cuthbertson.

"Do you still deal with Cuthbertson, father?"

"Yes, yes."

"I must pay him a visit and replenish my stock of collars."

"Mine wouldn't be much use to you nowadays," the Judge said, with a hint of ruefulness in his tone.

"I never did wear your collars. It was your tailcoat. You were rather proud that you had worn a tailcoat until you were well over forty which fitted me at seventeen."

Sir Alexander leant over to push the tray of drinks nearer to his son.

"Yes, well, I'm afraid I couldn't get into it now. But you're looking very thin, my boy. These last months have told on you a bit. Not surprising indeed. Tell me something of your adventures."

Midnight had chimed before John's story was told, chimed from that travelling-clock of John's mother which had occupied the centre of his father's writing-desk for thirty-five years

"Yes, we certainly seem to have made a sad muddle of the Levant," the Judge commented "The trouble with us as a nation is the dread of making up our minds to any definite course of action. All this miserable Irish imbroglio could have been avoided if we had faced up to facts before the war Yes, yes, I know what you'll say. in my Parliamentary days I was just as willing to drift as the rest of us Dear me, perhaps it's fortunate that the jury system with all its faults has not been given up, but it's surprising that the Scots, who on the whole have shown a greater capacity for making up their minds than the English, have a verdict of 'not proven,' whereas the compromising English have only 'guilty or 'not guilty.' Perhaps it was a wise instinct, for I believe half the verdicts of English juries would have been 'not proven' "

"What about the Irish patriots now in prison?" John asked

"Oh, I fancy an amnesty will be granted fairly soon I know you felt strongly about the methods by which the rebellion was suppressed But you must remember the shock to English opinion that Easter business gave. It was the kind of thing that simply doesn't happen in the British Isles And we hit out as we might hit out at an ugly-looking ghost But I haven't much hope of any definite step's being taken in Greece Popular opinion would favour the strongest action's being taken on behalf of Venizelos, but between you and me and in the strictest privacy of this room we're just beginning to grow a little nervous of popular opinion The safeguard of this country is the monarchy, and people at the head of affairs will be chary of giving anything in the nature of unqualified support to what looks like an anti-dynastic movement. We cannot

afford to weaken the sacrosanct character of the monarchy, which we have been slowly building up again ever since the shocks it received in the time of the Stuarts "

"But it wouldn't weaken the monarchy here to support a man who more passionately and more practically than any statesman here or abroad has expressed his faith in the victory of the Allies."

"No, I don't suppose it would, but our people aren't prepared to take the risk. However, that's not the only reason, and probably not even the chief reason. Indeed, it is perhaps nothing more than a handy excuse to do nothing, because doing nothing has become the politician's insurance policy against making mistakes which may cost him his career. Poor Winston's fate has been a grim warning to statesmen with ideas of their own. At this moment you will find it very hard, however eloquently you put your case, to provide any leading politician with enough confidence in his own judgment to risk a fall over mistakes in the Near East. It wouldn't be suitable for me to give you an opportunity of testing your powers of persuasion on anybody in particular, but you'll find no difficulty in getting somebody to give you the necessary introductions. I warn you, however, that you'll be discouraged by the reception you get.

"You've arrived in London at a bad moment, John, because the intrigues for power must shortly come to a head, and it would take a wiser man than me to forecast which of our rival statesmen will gain the job of leading the country. I have no business to be talking even to my own son like this, but I know you've always considered me incapable of holding an opinion that was not the commonplace of a large political group, and seeing you again like this after so many months and finding you so positive in your own ideas of what should be done in Greece has tempted me to open out a little. I did not have a very long Parliamentary career and I failed to obtain office, but I

was intimately in touch with many men who now occupy places in the Government and I can assure you that Churchill is almost the only leading politician who could forget the lobby, the private meetings with important newspaper proprietors, and the schoolboyish intrigues in which statesmen delight, in order to concentrate the whole of his mind on the war without regard to his own political career. Churchill may have been right about the Dardanelles or he may have been wrong. History alone can decide, and perhaps not even history. I express no opinion. In the rest the habit of intriguing for place is too deeply engrained, though perhaps I should make another exception in Carson, and certainly Grey.

"I don't know what's going to happen presently, but I shall be much astonished if this Government lasts much longer as it is now constituted. The game has begun, and until the game is finished no attention can be expected for what many will consider the chief object of the country at present, that is the getting on with the war. We had a similar deplorable state of affairs in the middle of last year while you were waiting for reinforcements at the Dardanelles. Politicians were always men of intrigue, but the growth and extension of the influence of the Press and the hope of using this influence to forward their own ambitions have certainly added another grave temptation to intrigue. We all kow-tow to the Press nowadays, not for fear of what it may say against us but for fear it may not say anything at all. When I was practising I couldn't have afforded to quarrel with the Press. A popular advocate depends as much upon the Press as a popular actor or a popular playwright."

"Well, you're quit of all that now," John said, "but I suppose you miss the Bar sometimes in the isolation of the Bench."

"Yes, I still miss it, but I fancy that will pass."

"What I should imagine was the greatest difficulty of a

judge was the sudden promotion above his contemporaries. That doesn't happen in the Navy or in the Army "

"But it happens in the Church Yes, it *is* difficult, and more difficult in these days when social formality is disappearing so fast The eighteenth century had an advantage over us there I was thinking just now when I referred to Mr Churchill as Winston how remote from the dignity of the Bench such a style of reference was However, there it is The tide has set that way "

"Have you condemned a man to death yet?"

"Not yet, thank God I am haunted by the thought of that inevitable occasion "

"What do you feel about the morality of capital punishment?"

"Between ourselves, John, I believe it would be better abolished, not, let me add, because I do not recognize the right of society to extirpate the individual who has transgressed, but because I believe capital punishment is not an effective deterrent Indeed, I sometimes wonder if it may not often be a morbid encouragement I have little doubt that within fifty years men and women will look back with amazement to a time when capital punishment was believed to be a necessity. Without being accused of cant I think it is possible to claim that man is more humane than he was and growing more humane all the time "

"The individual, I agree," said John. "But the moment the herd instinct is roused man reverts A theatre audience as an entity is far less intelligent than the average intelligence of its component individuals A mob can too easily become the expression of the savage mind Nations at war allow themselves as entities to think and act like barbarous reversions of themselves. What I dread from this war is a general lowering of those standards of humanity to which men with such laborious progress have attained. One sees that war refines yet further the fine

qualities of man, but at the same time it makes the bad qualities worse. The scorn of the men in the trenches for the men behind the lines or in Whitehall, though jealousy may be a contributing factor, is on the whole justified. Roughly, I think it would be true to say that the majority of the men fighting with brutal weapons are more admirable, and that the majority of the men fighting with civilized weapons like the pen are debased by the experience. And that's a paradox which makes me wonder whether the rapidity of recent progress may not be due to the fact that the progress is down hill."

The Judge shook his head.

"My dear John, I don't think we *can* accept that. It would make existence a joke. Surely we can discover a general tendency toward the amelioration of man's lot?"

"It all comes back to the eternal question whether this life on earth is a prologue or a one act play."

"And to that question no man has found a conclusive answer," said the Judge.

"That would be denied by believers. Millions of *them* have found a conclusive answer. But this is taking us away from what we were talking about. You were telling me how hopeless it was at present to expect any decision about our policy in Greece so long as the uncertainty created by this intrigue for power continues. But surely Grey stands outside such intrigue?"

"Utterly," Sir Alexander declared. "He is completely devoid of personal ambition. But what can a Foreign Minister do so long as uncertainty prevails over the future of the Government? Grey is not a man who enjoys making up his mind to take a definite step. In any case, I could not possibly ask him to see you. He would regard such a request as a gross abuse of my position, and he would be right. It is rather a pity that when I was in politics you were so scornful of politicians, for you might then have met most of the men in the present Government."

John was silent for a moment

"My contemporaries will be climbing up the ladder presently, and after the war I shall be able to watch *their* antics," he said at last.

The following morning John reported at 41 Adelphi Terrace, where he found Captain Wade much less interested in the future of Venizelist Greece than in the future of the Spicer Bureau.

"And I think your notion to work in with the Navy is capital. In fact I've practically got it approved at the Admiralty, and if the Vice-Admiral at Mudros is agreeable I think we may consider it as good as done. You want to go to Lipsia, eh?"

"Yes, sir, but you must realize that the whole plan depends on the way things pan out in Greece. It wouldn't be any use our going to Lipsia unless the Cyclades declare for the Provisional Government, and unless our Government decides to recognize the Provisional Government."

"Damn it, I can't manage that for you in Adelphi Terrace."

"No, but I've an idea that within the next few weeks things will move very fast in Athens. What I want you to do, once having accepted the proposal to go to Lipsia as a good proposal. . . you do accept that?"

"Yes, I've told you so. What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to let me take back with me three officers, preferably three able to speak modern Greek, to give me a free hand to act as I think best, to guarantee me the necessary finance, and to give me the authority to bring all the Spicer Bureaus in the Aegean under the central control of the Spicer Bureau in Lipsia."

"Is that all?"

"For the present."

"Thanks very much. Here, I think you've missed your vocation. You ought to have been a company promoter. Or a member of the present Cabinet. What do you want three officers for?"

"In case I do want them."

"Spare parts in fact?"

"More or less."

"Well, I was so damned glad you didn't let those fellows at Salonica steal our car that you shall have three officers if they can be got."

John was confident this would be the simplest matter, and betook himself that afternoon to a prominent London Philhellene who at once gave him the names of three men ideal for intelligence work in Greece. Two were promising young archæologists, and the third had been English master at a school in Athens. The archæologists were both in France, but the schoolmaster, an older man, was somewhere on the East Coast waiting to repel a German invasion. A request for the services of the archæologists was flatly refused, and the commanding officer of the battalion to which the schoolmaster was attached wrote a furious letter to say that 2nd Lieutenant X— was running the battalion mess and could not possibly be spared for service abroad. So the prominent Philhellene produced the names of three more possible intelligence officers, one of whom was working in the Ministry of Munitions, another in the Censor's office, and a third in the Foreign Trade Department. All three were declared to be as indispensable in their present jobs as the first three. The prominent Philhellene suggested two more possibles. He could not think of a third. But the last two did not strike John as suitable for the job he had in his mind, one being excessively ladylike and the other so shy that when he was spoken to he went into a spasm of nervousness which made him stammer. Both he felt would lack the magic touch of authority.

"Look here, must these fellows speak the lingo?" Captain Wade asked

John told his chief that it would be more useful, but that he would rather have the right kind of man without the language than the wrong kind of man with it

So presently Captain Wade produced a young subaltern of the Rutlands who had been severely wounded shortly after joining his battalion from Sandhurst and was still unfit for service in the field Mervyn Iredale was a pleasant youth, and if he was not quite the type John had pictured for the scheme in his mind he decided this boy of nineteen would be much more suitable than a man with languages but without that inherited ability to assume authority which had already been tested on the field of battle. So it was settled that when he returned to Greece Mervyn Iredale should accompany him, and that the other two officers asked for should be sent out by Captain Wade at the earliest moment that suitable fellows could be found.

John's time in London went swiftly by. The fever of the war was at its height, and in these feverish surroundings he felt his own temperature rising again. Every night at the Grand Babylon Hotel there was dancing at supper, which could be called the dance of death, so many of those who shared in it being home for a brief leave from the trenches and enjoying life for the last time. The festive air was enhanced by some of the officers dancing in overalls with red or yellow stripes and blue tunics instead of the monotonous khaki, but the true macabre touch was seldom wanting. One night, John saw in an invalid's carriage the stump of an officer whose legs had been amputated at the hips and one arm at the shoulder wheeling himself with the only limb left into the supper-room and grinning cheerily in response to the applause that greeted him. He was displaying to his countrymen and countrywomen the wreck of manhood made by a shell

as a symbol of the dauntlessness of the country's spirit. That while the high fever of war lasted his appearance could evoke the enthusiasm of these dancers of death was his reward for having been turned into a stump. He could not dream that the fever would pass and that he might be condemned to live on into old age, pitied by a few but regarded by the many as an unsightly object whose intrusion on the gaiety of a post-war world would be as little welcome as a grinning skull. Now the purple had not yet faded from the ribbon of his Military Cross. He was still a hero.

Besides that dance of death at the Grand Babylon Hotel there were parties every night at which the cool observer might have noted the disintegration of society precipitated by wartime conditions, but cool observers were few. John himself was so far from being one that he welcomed this disintegration as a severance of the last strands which bound society to Victorian ideas. Humbug, he felt, was a casualty at last. For the present, people were too much preoccupied with the business of getting on with the war to make practical use of their new clarity of vision. Party politicians could still intrigue for place. Profiteers could still batten on the country. Press lords could still exploit human stupidity. But after the war they would all be swept away into the past from which they had lingered on like so many prehistoric saurians with big bellies and small heads. Win the war, and then God help them! The new world that could be made when peace came would justify the war even if it lasted another three years.

Meanwhile, the war was not going too well. Russia seemed to have spent her effort for the present. The armies on the Western Front seemed to have reached a deadlock. The Germans were having a dangerous success with their intensified submarine warfare. Roumania would soon crack. The United States seemed unlikely to intervene. It was becoming more than ever vital that an

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on the Eastern Front should threaten Germany's weakest flank.

The advantages of energetic action he found plenty to agree with him, and the feeling of the 1st Committee in London was that Sir Edward was the politician most likely to emerge as the new 1st of the State from the confusion of intrigue for Carson had resigned from the Cabinet a year ago after the failure to come to the rescue of Serbia with the forces Carson might be induced to use the situation as the stepping-stone to power. The prominent Philhellene who had tried to find officers with knowledge of modern Greek suggested an interview between John and him, in which the facts of the 1st in Greece could be laid before him. Captain Carson gave permission for John to reveal all the secret information at his disposal. He too was inclined to believe that Sir Edward Carson would emerge on top from the 1st outside and inside the Cabinet, though he had rated Mr Lloyd George as dangerously in the run-race too with an eye on the Eastern Front as a paradise for ambitious politicians.

John had pondered the decency of an interview with Carson after the part he had played in Ireland. He appeased his conscience by recalling the attitude Fitz had taken towards him. Fitz had believed that Carson's 1st had been an honest enmity which was not inspired by snakes and ladders of party politics.

The ex-Law Officer of the Crown received him in his 1st at the Law Courts, a grimy little den the neo-gothic 1st of which looked out on melancholy grey stone 1st through the drench of a November morning. The 1st sat with his wig on his knee like Dr Livesey in *the Island*, his sombre, heavily pouched eyes staring at him, his deep chin thrust down upon his chest. He listened to John's tale of Greece as he must have

listened to many a legal argument throughout his life. John had the feeling that his recital was not making the slightest impression upon him. He felt like Mr Pickwick putting his case before Mr Sergeant Snubbins. To his surprise when he finished his tale Carson said weightily.

"I am considering whether I shall overthrow the Government. I am promised votes of enough members to enable me to do it if I can find a suitable opportunity to move a resolution which will amount to a vote of censure. The situation in Greece might provide me with that opportunity. When are you going back to Athens?"

John told him he expected to leave London next week and hoped to reach Athens about ten days later.

Carson was silent for a moment or two.

Then he turned to the prominent Philhellene.

"Have you means of receiving a confidential communication from Commander Ogilvie?"

"That could very easily be arranged, Sir Edward."

"You say you fear a massacre of Venizelists, Commander Ogilvie?"

"It may happen."

"And even of Allied subjects in Athens?"

"It is possible."

"Should you see signs of the imminence of such an unfortunate event, perhaps you will telegraph discreetly, and I may be able to help."

On their way out through the maze of the Law Courts the prominent Philhellene enthusiastically declared to John that the interview had been most encouraging.

"Encouraging to what?" John asked. "The only thing I thought it encouraged was the willingness of the unfortunate Venizelists in Athens to be butchered for a Parliamentary holiday."

"I didn't understand him to take that attitude. I think he intended to rely on your ability to warn him in time and avert such a disaster. Don't forget he resigned from

the Government a year ago over the failure to help Serbia I believe myself he may emerge as the political leader the country is looking for ”

“It would be ironical if the man who had done so much to make the war inevitable should lead the country out of it,” John said

But that evening he received some discouragement to the hopes Carson had raised when dining with some friends in Chelsea he met Louis Matheson

This was the enthusiastic young Liberal who in 1906 had ousted Colonel Yarborough from what for many years had been considered the impregnable Unionist stronghold of South-East Kensington. In those days he had been a spiritual and ascetic figure, his oratory supplied with fire from the doctrines of what was called Christian Socialism, with fuel from the resources of Cambridge scholarship Even amid that huge sprawling Liberal majority he had quickly found his feet When the war came he was in the Cabinet, and he had been one of those pushed out in the scramble of the Unionists for place during that tragic summer of 1915

John was shocked by his appearance. It was difficult to believe that this bloated puffy creature with the slurred speech and dull eye of the soaker had once spoken with inspiration and acted from conviction

“I thought like that when I entered Parliament,” he said to John, after listening to his views on what would happen after the war when good men and true were to get together and build Jerusalem in England’s green and pleasant land. “I thought like that once,” he repeated, with a leer across the decanter of whisky he was holding. “But you’ll find that a year or two of politics will effectually cure you of what I perceive is a dangerous propensity toward idealism. You can’t go into politics, my young friend, and expect to preserve your soul ”

Mrs Matheson, one of those fading English blondes

who manage to be at once thin and floppy, eyed the decanter anxiously. She belonged to a family which expected its members to attain worldly success. When she married Louis Matheson in 1906 she was held to have played her part according to tradition. Now she was alluded to as 'poor Norma'.

"Louis, my dear," she expostulated, "it's not fair to discourage Commander Ogilvie. You know you're not really as cynical as that."

"It's not cynicism to warn an idealist that he cannot serve God and the party machine," said Matheson. "It's sound spiritual advice."

"And you maintain disillusionment is inevitable for anybody who enters politics?" John asked. "Even if he is without personal ambition?"

"Inevitable," declared Matheson, gulping down the best part of the whisky and soda in front of him. "To begin with, unless you obtain office you can do nothing. You're a mere party hack trotting round and round the ring at the crack of the party whip. In order to obtain office you have to betray your friends and cheat your rivals. When you have obtained office you have to sacrifice your principles and stifle your beliefs."

"Then to succeed all politicians must be dishonest?" John asked.

"All. But most politicians have become so inured to deceiving the electorate that they end by deceiving themselves. Hence they are able to persuade themselves that they are honest men. Of course, there have been super-cynics like Walpole and Disraeli who have not bothered to do this, but they justified themselves by a profound belief in the venality of every man."

"Who will emerge on top in the fresh scramble for place which is now impending?" John asked. He was curious to hear what Matheson would say about Carson.

"Ah, if I knew that," Matheson replied, pouring him-

self out another whisky, "I might find myself back in the Cabinet My mistake was being loyal to Asquith It's always the loyal colleagues who are thrown overboard first "

"But who do you think has the best chance?" John pressed "What about Carson?"

"Too honest a man," said Matheson

"So some politicians *can* remain honest?"

"Yes, but they do not become Prime Ministers."

On the following day the Lord Mayor's Banquet was held, speaking at which the Prime Minister proclaimed the hearty sympathy of the British Government with that great patriot M Venizelos The London Philhellenes were jubilant They were sure that this public reference was the prelude to full recognition of the Provisional Government and the discomfiture of King Constantine. John, with the depressing recollection of Matheson's conversation at dinner, was less jubilant London began to irritate him, and he urged his chief to let him get back to Athens with Mervyn Iredale. The old boy, who had been enjoying his company at supper parties, was reluctant to part with him, but it was settled at last that he should leave about the twentieth of November, carrying a confidential crossed bag from the Foreign Office to the Legation in Athens

Among the people John saw while he was in London were the Rodneys, who had given up their windmill and were now living in a late Georgian house in a decayed Islington square The shallow bow-window and the Trafalgar balcony suggested the house of a retired naval officer in some watering-place on the South coast, and used as he was by now to the fashion for stripes of vivid colour in the carpets and curtains of his more advanced friends the violence of the contrasts in the Rodneys' house managed to surprise him It was all he could do to abstain from comment and thereby provoke that expres-

sion of disdainful superiority of Freddie Rodney's when anybody betrayed himself a few months behind the latest intellectual mode. He would have liked to tell Freddie that if he had watched a few shell-bursts he would enjoy less these zigzags of scarlet, orange and mauve by which he had surrounded himself.

"In the Navy, John, I perceive," Freddie observed.

"I should rather say on the outskirts of the Navy,"

John replied.

"Playing at sailors in fact," his critical friend added.

"You were playing at policemen last time I saw you,"

John retorted.

"But Freddie isn't doing that now," Jane Rodney put in quickly. "His conscience would not allow him to do anything to help this frightful war in any way."

"That's logical at least," John admitted. "But what will you do, Freddie, when they call you up?"

"I shall object."

"They'll send you to gaol."

"I shall go to gaol."

John wondered if he would. Freddie was fond of his comfort. In the end it would probably be discovered he had too weak a heart to stand anything more violent in the way of exertion than a lift in a Government office. The conscientious objector who was ready, anxious indeed to suffer for his faith, was no Freddie Rodney whose conscience was a high-sounding name for self-indulgence.

"And I suppose you are enjoying the war, John?"

"I'm beginning to get a little tired of it," he admitted.

Rodney pushed a yellow-bound volume to him across a self-consciously and austere artistic table of some light wood.

"Have you read that?"

It was *Du Côté de Chez Swann* by Marcel Proust.

"I haven't even heard of it."

Rodney shook his head compassionately.

"A piece of really great literature at last, and Captain Courageous has not heard of it. My god, John, can't you see what a bloody business this is for civilization? Can't you see that it is the duty of all artists to protest against the Great European Bore by refusing to have anything to do with it? Can't you see that anybody who does have anything to do with it is not an artist?"

"But what difference does it make to a world at war whether I am an artist or not? And anyway what is the peculiar merit of being an artist that I should be worried about my status? I'll agree with you that probably most of the experience gained through active participation in the war will be worth nothing from the point of view of art, but I doubt if deliberate abstention from it for the sake of art will be worth any more. If I'm asked to spend perhaps five years in a bad temper I may as well relieve my feelings by smashing the furniture as by sulking over quires of foolscap under the impression that by taking the latter course I am keeping my sacred vocation unspotted."

"But Freddie feels that action delays thought," Jane Rodney put in, sure that this time Freddie would not turn a cold grey eye upon her, because she had heard Freddie himself make that very remark.

However, Freddie did turn a cold grey eye upon her, for Freddie's conscience was beginning to assure him that Jane had outlived her utility to him as a man, and that any further responsibility for her emotional comfort was liable to have a most prejudicial effect on the freedom vital to him as an artist. He was, in a word, tired of her.

"Oh dear, have I said the wrong thing?" poor Jane asked of the universe, fluttering her eyelids in what once upon a time and not so very long ago Freddie himself used to tell her was a delicious expression of helplessness. To John those frightened eyelids suggested a frightened bird beating itself against the glass in a vain effort to reach the light.

"Oh no," said her husband chillingly "But I don't really require explaining to John "

"Indeed you don't, Freddie," John agreed, with a twinkle "You are supremely self-evident "

"The usual grin through a horse-collar which the English gentleman calls a sense of humour," Rodney sneered "And in that ridiculous midshipman's uniform or whatever it is you are wearing it looks more than usually fatuous "

This made John laugh with such heartiness that poor Jane Rodney decided the atmosphere was not so strained as she had been supposing it and suggested brightly that a cocktail seemed indicated

John asked for news of the Rayners It appeared that Rayner, annoyed by the activity of the coastguards in South Wales, had painted with black and red cubes the cottage which had been lent to them This combined with his German wife had brought upon him the suspicion of authority. His last novel had been suppressed as obscene. Rodney thought he was trying to get to Switzerland

"Good luck to him wherever he is," said John, raising his glass

Artistic people now began to turn up, and the room was soon a babble of jargon. A young woman with bright red hair flung herself down by John and asked him to tell her a fairy-story. The only adequate reply to that was to put her across his knee and spank her, but feeling that such an action might shock even this advanced society he merely looked bored and embarrassed by the idiotic request

"Won't you tell me a fairy-story?" she crooned at him with disgusting affectation. "Oh, do tell me a fairy-story. Do, do, do, I want you to. All the way on the omnibus I was telling Dicky Donovan I wouldn't be happy unless I could sit on a stool and listen to an old old fairy-story this evening Didn't I, Dicky?"

But Dicky, a lean and swarthy young man in a butcher's-blue shirt, with a closely shaven and well-powdered chin which gave an effect of blue mould forming on cheese, was engaged in an argument over expressionism with another lean but less swarthy young man whose chin was filmed with the seedlings of a beard, and he paid no attention to the girl with bright red hair

"Well, if you won't tell me a fairy-story, unkind stranger," she said to John, "tell me what these funny little bits of ribbon are doing on your coat " And as she spoke she scratched with the not too clean nail of her forefinger at the ribbons on his jacket.

John rose abruptly

"Good-bye, Jane Good-bye, Freddie I must be off"

"The Captains and the Kings depart," chanted that obnoxious hussy with the red hair, glaring owlshly at the burbling jargoneers around

John shut the front door behind him, and after an incredulous glance over his shoulder at that decayed Islington square in the dim precautionary light of war-time London he turned to walk rapidly away down hill.

For the first time he felt that conscription should be applied with the utmost severity

"That bloody man with the mildewed chin and that other bloody man with the mustard-and-cress beard and that god-awful girl! And really Freddie's pretty bloody too!"

It was the day after this unenjoyed glimpse of art in the toils of war that Prudence asked John if he would take her to see Charlie Chaplin

"Who's Charlie Chaplin?"

"Oh, John, you are a silly. He's most frightfully funny"

"I dare say he is, but where is he funny?"

"In the cinema, you stupid."

This was the first indication he had that the films had at last produced a star. So he took Prudence to a picture-house off Shaftesbury Avenue, and they sat in a packed audience laughing at Charlie Chaplin. Indeed, John laughed so loudly that Prudence had to thump him once or twice for the conspicuousness of his mirth amid that mirthful throng.

When they came out into the raw November air and walked along toward the Leicester Square Tube Station he felt exhausted by laughter but happier than at any moment since he reached London. Prudence clung to his arm affectionately.

"Don't you love Charlie Chaplin, John?"

"I certainly do."

"And had you really never heard of him?"

"Honour bright, I hadn't."

"I say, I feel jolly proud of introducing you to Charlie Chaplin," she proclaimed.

"You have every right to be. It was an experience I wouldn't have missed for anything."

He was thinking now less of the great comedian than of the laughing audience, so many of whom would be going back to the trenches revived by that laughter, and some of whom would have been granted on this grey November afternoon the last bright memory they would have of their London before an unheard shell or swift bullet destroyed them.

"But I suppose Freddie Rodney would lay down that it was not art," he murmured.

"Who's Freddie Rodney? Is he on the films?"

"No, he's a novelist."

"Pouff!" she ejaculated in disdain. "I think novels are jolly dull. Miss Peachey simply adores novels. All about kissing somebody's ruby lips. I think kissing's awfully silly. Why do people kiss?"

"That puzzles the Japanese."

"Does it? Then I'll live in Japan when I'm grown up. It's stupid enough for children to be kissed, but fancy grown-ups kissing each other!"

"You kiss me good-night very charmingly."

"But that's different. I don't mind that particularly. I do love Charlie Chaplin's moustache, don't you, John?"

"Would you like to kiss that?"

She thumped him in the ribs, and they passed into the hot-water-bottle atmosphere of the Tube, with its gusts of rubberoid air along the echoing tunnels between the lift and the platform.

On the day before he left London John called at Claremont Gardens to say good-bye to Miriam Stern.

"I think you're glad to be going back to Greece," she told him.

"I know I am."

"Not yet tired of action?"

"Not while half the world is in action, most of it much less alluring action than any I shall experience."

"I wonder if you'll see Emil."

"I shall if my plan comes off."

"And what is this plan, John?"

"You're only asking that because you think it's politely sympathetic to take an interest in what in your heart you believe is a sheer waste of time. I should have to explain the Greek political situation before I could explain my plan, and the other day when I started talking about Greek politics you looked definitely bored, so I shut up."

She protested.

"I wasn't at all bored, John, but perhaps spending so much of my time alone as I have done during the last eighteen months has got me into bad habits socially. Being alone a great deal makes one often unconsciously

distract in company, even when it is such welcome company as yours Did I offend you?"

"My dear, of course you didn't offend me, but I realized that being intensely preoccupied with a job remote from ordinary life gets one too easily into the habit of supposing that the rest of the world is as much interested as oneself in the maze of one's own preoccupation. It's like expecting somebody to be absorbed in the spectacle of somebody else solving a problem of knitting when one knows nothing about knitting "

"But, John, I am interested in anything you do "

"Wouldn't it be truer to say that you are interested in the effect on myself of anything I do? The actual doing isn't interesting. Women are never interested in the tale of men's actions Why should they be unless it is of action in which they can imagine themselves sharing? A woman admires a man's courage She is content to know he has borne himself creditably in a call upon that courage. But surely the details do not interest her? Suppose for instance I was fighting in France instead of messing about in Greece and I were awarded a V C for some act of conspicuous valour You would be proud of me, but would you be able to remember exactly how many Germans I had shot or bombed or how many machine-guns I had knocked out? I don't think so And you less easily than most women, for you would not have felt the slightest inclination to criticize me if I had kept out of the war altogether. Admit you still consider all I am doing in this war is fundamentally a waste of my time "

"I did not expect you to keep out of the war, John."

"That's not an answer. Do you consider I have developed under the test of these last eighteen months?"

"I think you seem more sure of yourself "

"But that may be no more than the effect of a little superficial authority—the result of commanding where formerly one would have requested. Do you think that I

have a clearer notion of why man exists upon this planet?"

"You've not had time to ask yourself riddles about the universe," she parried "Ask me that question again when the world has been at peace for a year, and I'll be able to answer it Frankly, I don't know, dearest John, I don't even know whether to be glad or sorry that you seem happy at the prospect of going back to Greece "

"I'll tell you something, Miriam All the experience I have had during the war has not taught me a small fraction of what you taught me that night in Cracow "

She buried her face in her hands

"John, don't say things like that to a woman of fifty-four They hurt "

"Hurt, my dear, why should that hurt you? I won't pretend that I understood even faintly at the time what a lesson you had taught me, but all through the years that came after I have been gradually realizing the force of that lesson, and I can tell you now how much "

"A moment of utter weakness," she interposed bitterly.

"I'm afraid it seems to me a moment of utter strength And more so now than ever," he added "Anyway, most of the self-indulgence I have managed to avoid has been inspired by the memory of it And you cannot reproach me with the least inconstancy to our perfect friendship "

"None, my dear "

"And don't you think you might assume that the chief credit for such a result lies with yourself?"

"Don't let's apportion the credit You've made me exquisitely happy You're quite right, John I *would* rather have heard what you have just told me than the most lucid exposition of Greek politics. You are curiously feminine in some ways. I suppose that's a great part of your charm for women We are strange creatures, extolling and indeed desiring uncompromising masculinity, and all the time wishing in our hearts that men were

not quite so excessively and peculiarly men. I see most of the married women I know and note how when passion dies down they come to regard their husbands like large spoilt dogs about the house. How much more they would enjoy their company if when desire has passed they could be transformed into placid elderly females, with an intelligent appreciation of domestic economy and a capacity for sympathetic response to moods! Yes, I'm afraid I do rather grudge you to action and do still think that fundamentally it is a waste of your time, but I am not foolish enough to suppose that the subtlest feminine intuition in you could be wholeheartedly applied at such a time as this to anything except the pleasure of that action in which men delight so much that they will even play golf rather than forgo it. You are looking at the clock. You must be off, I know."

"I must be off in another quarter of an hour. Play Chopin to me for that quarter of an hour."

She seated herself at the Steinway, and asked what he wanted her to play

"The 'Twenty-first Prelude in B flat major and the Nocturne in D flat major and if there's time for a parting tune that little Waltz in A flat of Brahms"

And lolling back he lived, in those swift thoughts which come with music and sleep, years in that quarter of an hour. Then he kissed her on both cheeks and went.

It was seven o'clock of a murky November evening when John reached the Foreign Office and found it delivered over to cleaners. The janitor was pessimistic about his being given his way-bill and the Athens bag before next morning. However, he was obstinate, and in the end a clerk was extracted from some remote room. He was given the crossed confidential bag for Athens, heavily weighted with lead so that if the ship he was

travelling in were attacked by a submarine the bag could be flung overboard and sink rapidly

The next day he and Iredale left Charing Cross At the Embassy in Paris John was handed a telegram from Captain Wade.

Lingfield reports situation in Athens likely to become serious Make all possible speed and telegraph me urgently on arrival latest developments Think I have found you two good men but shall not send them until I hear from you.

At half-past one on Wednesday, November 29th, when John and Mervyn Iredale were rowing round Taranto harbour in search of a French despatch-boat alleged to be sailing for the Piræus that afternoon, Lingfield and Yarrow were walking along the narrow walled garden in front of the Spicer Bureau, one of the old Athenian houses in Anaximander Street, on their way to lunch together at a neighbouring restaurant. Suddenly Lingfield put a hand to his head and sat down on the low parapet beside the path

"My God, I think I'm done, Yarrow. My head's going round in the most extraordinary way."

Yarrow ran to the gate and called to Panayotti the chauffeur and Stavro Priphtes who since his arrival in Athens from Volo had insisted on sitting beside the chauffeur in order to protect the life of the man to whom he was devoted and from whom his separation for months had been a long heartache. By the time they reached Lingfield he had collapsed on the paved path. The great gaunt highlander stooped and picked up in his arms the man who was as big as himself and carried him back into the Bureau where the refugee from Mileto, Doctor Miltiades Vampas, was taking advantage of the emptiness

of the office during the lunch-hour to work on his translation of the innumerable scraps of information that were coming in from all parts of Athens to give warning of what the Royalists intended to do to the Venizelists on Friday, the first of December

"The Commander is ill, Doctor, what is the matter with him?" Stavro asked in an agony.

Doctor Vampas bent over to listen to Lingfield's heart, felt his pulse, and advised he should be driven at once to a clinic, the doctor of which was highly esteemed. So they carried Lingfield out to the old Ford which had escaped from the clutches of the Army in Salonica, and half an hour later had left him safely in bed in a white hygienic-looking room with an apparently competent nurse to tend him. Doctor Stathatos would not commit himself to a final opinion, but was inclined to think that Lingfield was suffering from complete nervous exhaustion and that possibly his heart was affected. He needed complete rest and absolute quiet for at least three weeks. Yes, Monsieur Yarrow could visit him to-morrow morning, but not to-night, please. He must not be excited by visits. And he had taken the liberty of removing his clothes out of reach.

"I shall stay on guard here," Stavro announced when Yarrow was getting back into the car. "Nothing is too bad for these dirty traitors to do."

"But Doctor Stathatos may object."

"How can he object when I tell him I shall stay?"

And looking at the great gaunt highlander Yarrow decided it would take a bold doctor to object.

That afternoon the alarmist reports came in faster and faster to the Bureau. The shops of prominent Venizelists had been marked with crosses of red so that they might be sacked on Friday as soon as the British and French marines landed from the ships to take the ten mountain-batteries which the King had suggested should be demanded from him and which now he declared he could not give because

of the wrath the proposed surrender had kindled in the hearts of all loyal Greeks Reservists were coming in from the villages of Attica and Bœotia, and were being served out at the barracks with 150 rounds each The King and the Army were proposing to retire to Thessaly as soon as the Venizelists were cleaned up in Athens Large quantities of wheat were being requisitioned They were only waiting for news of the final collapse of Roumania to attack the Allies at Salonica in the rear

The staff of the Spicer Bureau was growing acutely nervous The flabby face of Doctor Multiades Vampas had not looked so sicklied since those days in Mileto when he had thought he would be killed by the Turks

Yarrow sent off a long urgent telegram to London, asserting positively that the ultimatum delivered by the French Admiral demanding the surrender of the ten mountain-batteries would be refused and that if he landed Marines to advance upon Athens they would be shot down, which would be the signal for a general massacre of Liberals and looting of all their shops and houses There was even a serious possibility of danger for the Allied nationals in Athens Lingfield had been taken seriously ill and was in a clinic, but before he had collapsed he had expressed his conviction that, unless something were done in London to stop the landing of the Marines, Friday would be a day of disaster.

But nothing could be done in London to stop anything anywhere The long-expected political crisis had come to a head, and the members of the Government were now intensely preoccupied with the problem of who was to be Prime Minister when Mr Asquith had been eliminated from public affairs. There was hardly one prominent politician who had not an ultimatum in his pocket for some other prominent politician What did they care about ultimatums to the King of Greece from a French Admiral? What did they care that Roumania was

going up in smoke? What did they care if every Liberal in Athens was to be shot down? What did they care about anything except their own positions in the future Government of the country?

The mighty *Britannic* had been sunk in the Zea channel. The *Braemar Castle* had been torpedoed off Myconos. The German and Austrian submarines were at large in the Aegean while most of the ships of the French and the British squadrons were anchored at Salamis, of as little use to practical warfare as the Persian triremes sunk by the Greeks two millenniums and a half ago. But in London it was more important for Mr Lloyd George to let Mr Bonar Law know that if Mr Asquith stayed in power he would give Mr Winston Churchill the Admiralty again, which would help Mr Bonar Law to pull his weight in the crew against Mr Asquith, and submit to being stroked by Mr Lloyd George.

When about nine o'clock Yarrow drove back to Lingfield's apartment in that new house at the end of that new road he noticed on the way that the people in the streets were talking earnestly together in small groups. There was an ominous tenseness in the atmosphere. Sophia the cook had not yet been notified of Lingfield's illness and Yarrow at the prompting of his sub-consciousness told her nothing about it. He ate his lonely dinner, with the second volume of Doughty's *Wanderings in Arabia Deserta* propped up against the cruet behind his plate, but those sentences crackling with the heat of the Arabian sun could not warm the chill diffused about this bleak gaslit room by the premonition of disaster which haunted it.

After dinner Sophia came in to ask if she could go out for a short while.

"But it's after ten o'clock. What an hour to start your courting, Sophia!"

She giggled. Hideous though she was, with a sooty

moustache and three huge hairy moles on her chin, Sophia could always find a man, and she would slink out to roam the wasteground behind the house like some mangy old tabby in a fever of concupiscence

"Not an admirable type of womanhood," Lingfield used to say. "But a devilish good cook "

When Sophia was gone the silence of the house became more oppressive than ever. Yarrow felt a creeping penetrating fear he had not experienced since childhood. There was not a piece of furniture which did not quiver and glow with portentous life in the light of the four incandescent mantles in the florid gasolier. He rose from the table and took Doughty to an armchair, but in his new position he was facing the sideboard, and this had a bleak mirror behind it wherein the room was reflected with an added menace of evil.

"No wonder this blasted apartment got on Lingfield's nerves," he ejaculated aloud

And the sound of his own voice added to his dread, so thick was the ensuing silence when it ceased

He got up from the chair and walked across to the door. Once more that childish terror, this time of the door that must be opened, overcame him, but he made an effort to control his nerves and flung the door open defiantly. There was nothing in the corridor, except that from the doorway of the kitchen came the sound of an alarum-clock clicking like a grasshopper. He went across to his bedroom and his heart leapt when a dark shape moved by the window, but it was only the curtain twitched by the breeze that was blowing in. He walked over to draw the curtains, and looked down at the dim wasteground on which here and there the lamps in the tents or huts of the refugees burned dully. In the moist clouded moonlight he fancied he could discern a group of figures near the wall of the backyard, and it was only too easy to imagine that they were watching the house. He

went back to the sitting-room and took out a notebook, on a page of which he wrote.

Am I frightened?

After a moment of meditation he wrote against this question

Yes

Then below he wrote

Ought I to be frightened?

and quickly added:

No

It was a habit of Yarrow's thus to examine his conscience with a pencil, and by the clear statement of his lapses or failures or vices in blacklead his will was braced to contend against them

He gave up sitting with Doughty in the tents of the Bedouin and tried to give his attention to a mathematical problem. But his mind refused to concentrate, and as a last resource he took out his flute and murdered the first movement of a Mozart sonata. Yet execrably as he played the music cast its beneficent spell upon the room so potently that in the end it did succeed in exorcising the spirit of brooding fear by which it was possessed.

It was after midnight when, to the relief of his solitude, Sophia came in.

"Where is Monsieur?" she asked.

"Not back yet."

"Monsieur is not coming back?"

"I expect so, why?"

"I think Monsieur is not coming back. Shall I read the cards for you?"

Sophia was usually entertaining as a fortune-teller, and Yarrow picked up the pack, shuffled and cut twice. The

Seven of Clubs, and the Eight of Spades, and the Ace of Spades upside down lay upon the top of the three heaps.

"Not good," said Sophia, shaking her head, as she pointed to the Seven "Treachery!" She pointed to the Eight "Violence!" She pointed to the Ace "Death!"

She was speaking in Greek, but Yarrow had never found it so easy to follow her

"Treachery, violence, and death," she repeated. "And perhaps in this house"

"Are you trying to warn me, Sophia?"

She shrugged her shoulders

"The cards are talking, not Sophia."

"And when will all this happen in this house?"

"Very soon."

"Not to-night?"

She shook her head

Nevertheless he felt as frightened as a child when he undressed, and he surrendered so far to childhood's fears that he left the gas burning full on when he turned over to sleep uneasily.

In the morning, feeling rather ashamed of himself, Yarrow went down to the clinic, where he was allowed to see Lingfield, who wanted to get up.

"Impossible," he was told.

"But damn it, this is the last day. Hell will be let loose to-morrow," Lingfield fretted.

"My dear fellow, you couldn't possibly deal with an ordinary day, and you certainly can't deal with to-morrow. I tell you I felt a bit queer myself last night."

He related the result of the fortune-telling

"Sophia meant to warn you," Lingfield muttered. "Don't sleep there to-night on any account. She pressed you about my absence, eh? I wonder if they know I'm away"

"Who are 'they'?"

"Haven't you noticed for the last week that there's

always the same group of rather unpleasant-looking individuals sitting round a table outside that drinking-booth they've rigged up on the wasteground about fifty yards beyond the house?"

"I didn't notice them particularly."

"They're watching my exits and my entrances. They're puzzled because they haven't seen me come back. They're wondering if I got in unknown to them. They've been pumping Sophia. And she's spotted their game. She wasn't warning you so much last night as warning me not to go back. Poor old hag, she's done her best."

"But how did she make me cut those cards?"

"Oh, any of the black cards would have looked convincing, and she would have slipped the Ace of Spades in somehow. It's easy enough to doctor a pack."

"Is it?"

"Very easy. Too bloody easy," Lingfield muttered to himself. "You'd better sleep at the Bureau to-night, Yarrow. Oh god, my head. It's beginning to go round again. I'd be no damned use anyway. You must carry on. Any word of Ogilvie?"

"Not since that telegram from Taranto saying he hoped to be here by the first."

"He's chosen a good day. I hope he doesn't think of marching to Athens with the Marines," said Lingfield. "He'll probably never arrive if he does. Oh god, my head, and oh god, I wonder what *will* happen to-morrow?"

"There's a terrific panic among the Venizelists."

"I'll bet there is. And they may well be in a panic. Have you ever seen a Balkan mob out for blood?"

"No."

"It's not a pretty sight. And you're not likely to forget it for some time. I feel a cur lying here, but I don't believe I could stand on my feet."

Yarrow wondered whether to tell Lingfield that Stavro Priphtes had insisted on mounting guard over the clinic.

He decided to say nothing. Lingfield would insist on his going to the Bureau, which would upset Stavro. And the man was a jewel.

"Well, I'll be going now, Lingfield. I'll take your advice and sleep at the Bureau."

"You'd better take your things to the Legation. If they do attack my house they'll destroy everything."

"I'd better move your things too."

"No, no, leave them where they are. I've a notion I'm never coming out of here."

"Don't be absurd!"

But Lingfield was not being absurd. That afternoon just after Yarrow had transferred his hold-all with its rich assortment of contents to the Legation a message came from the clinic to say that Lingfield was dead.

The nightmare toward which John and Iredale were sailing up the Corinthian Gulf had begun.

That night the watchers round Lingfield's house closed in upon it. Early next morning about seven o'clock, before the Marines had landed to take the mountain-batteries, four hundred Reservists with two machine-guns shot that new house at the end of the street into a pepper-box. Then they broke in and not finding Lingfield tore the apartment to pieces, but they did not catch Stavro Priphtes, who in despair over Lingfield's death had gone to brood over the place where he had lived. Stavro climbed up by a pipe on the roof and after shooting three of the Reservists from the corner of a chimney-stack made his way along the roofs to the other end of the street and reached the Bureau just as John and Iredale drove up from the Piræus through a seething mob.

"Thank God, you've reached here, Ogilvie," Yarrow exclaimed. "I don't think I was built to enjoy this kind of life alone. Lingfield's dead."

"Dead?" cried John. "Do you mean he was killed?"

"Only indirectly. He died in a clinic yesterday afternoon Hark at the mob!"

The roar of it along the main streets of the city rose and fell, now exultant, now angry, now low and menacing.

Nightmare From the roof of the Spicer Bureau one can see the silhouettes of French Marines advancing over the low hills below the Acropolis, advancing over the Pnyx where the voice of Pericles was once heard and the Athenians voted to resist Sparta The Greek troops resisting France and England open fire From here it looks like a battle between toy soldiers Wounded and dead the silhouettes like toy soldiers vanish from the skyline

Telephone-bell ringing Telephone-bell ringing

An ashen-faced newspaper correspondent hurries in to say that a detachment of French sailors at the Temple of Theseus have been surrounded.

Telephone-bell ringing Telephone-bell ringing

"French Bureau? French Bureau? Hullo, hullo, hullo! Is that the French Bureau? Your men are surrounded Hullo, hullo, hullo! No use, we're cut off"

No telephone-bell now The telephone-bell is silent

"Take down this telegram, Miss Harford. Concentrate, please, Miss Harford"

Tap-tap-tap-tap of the typewriter Tap-tap-tap-tap-tap of a machine-gun on a neighbouring roof

Very Urgent

*Parties of Allied Marines landed this morning
and marched*

A burst of firing at the end of the street.

"Please concentrate, Miss Harford, and don't listen to street noises"

Parties of Allied Marines landed this morning . . .

A bullet chips the window-sill. The little blonde stenographer screams

"There's nothing to be frightened about here, Miss Harford."

Yarrow should have warned her not to come up to the Bureau this morning. Her people down at Phalerum will be anxious. Too late now. She must stay here. That powder-blue jersey rather becoming.

"Please concentrate, Miss Harford. I want to get this telegram off to London if possible.

"landed this morning stop met with firm resistance from Greek regulars stop Reservists imported from surrounding country are creating pandemonium in city stop regret to inform you Lieutenant-Commander G. Lingfield died suddenly yesterday afternoon stop have taken charge here and shall make arrangements best suited for safety of personnel stop am endeavouring to despatch this before telegraphic communication is cut stop full report when situation is clearer stop it is very grave at moment"

Tap-tap-tap-tap of the typewriter. But the machine-gun has stopped.

"Tell Panayotti to crank up the car. I'm going round to the Legation to see what's happening and get this telegram sent off. Hurry up with that encyphering. No, I don't want anybody to come with me. Get back to your work, Doctor Vampas. Panicking will only make matters worse. Very well then, close the damned shutters if you'll all feel safer."

A green twilight over the rooms of the Spicer Bureau. The twilight seems to allay the hysteria. Bursts of firing in every direction.

"No, no, they're not going to attack the Bureau. I wish we could get in touch with the French. Is that the telegram, Miss Harford? Good. I'll be back as soon as I can."

The music of the mob so menacing at a slight distance is hardly noticeable when one drives through it in a car. No more than crowds of people wandering about the streets with apparently no particular object in view. Almost a holiday air. Difficult to believe they have come out to celebrate the shooting of some British and French Marines. But those spasmodic fusillades in different parts of the city betoken a more dangerous mood behind this gaping holiday crowd promenading up and down.

Honk! Honk!

They don't seem to mind being driven through by a British naval officer.

Honk! Honk!

Step aside quite meekly. Jump aside like sheep. They are sheep. Or are they?

"Not too fast, Panayotti. If you bump into one of these chaps you may set the whole lot off."

Honk! honk! honk! honk!

One of them spat on the bonnet of the car as it passed. Fix them well with a cold eye. Suppose one of them spits in my eye?

"It's all right, Panayotti. They're not getting nasty. You nearly drove over a fellow's toe then. Turn round? Certainly not. That would be just enough to make them rush the car. Besides, there's as big a jam of people behind us as there is in front. We'll soon reach the street turning down into the square where the Legation is. Keep in as close to the pavement as possible. Never mind if we're on the wrong side of the road. There's no other traffic. Oh, my God!"

Six Reservists with bandoliers dragging along a fat shopkeeper. And they've knocked out an eye. Hopeless to protest. Seems cowardly, but there's nothing to be done. Can't stop a Greek shopkeeper talking. He's turning round now to argue with them. That jab with a rifle must have cracked a rib. Ugh, it's a sickening sight!

Honk, honk, honk, honk! Poor devil. Why doesn't he make the best of it and go along without turning round to argue? He'll get another rib broken in a moment Filthy-looking swine, those Reservists

"Round here, Panayotti "

Strange that as soon as one hears the mob behind one it becomes menacing again Legation just as usual, but they're all looking a bit worried

"Hullo, Warburton. Your friends are on the war-path this morning. Oh, the French Admiral's shut up in the Zappeion, is he? Hope they'll shoot the old fool No, I only reached the Piræus this morning and found poor Lingfield's people in rather a flutter I took over from James Yarrow You think it will all be over by lunch-time? I doubt it. Well, I can't wait now I brought round a telegram to the Chancery to be sent off when the Legation telegrams go I think the worst is yet to come Where's Rose? At the Grande Bretagne? If you take my advice you'll bring her to the Legation at once. The Grande Bretagne is one of the places your friends will shoot up first. That's a stable tip "

Fatuous complacency. Warburton doesn't realize that the whole of this business was planned to stir up the city and make an end of the Liberals in Athens once and for all Lingfield was perfectly right .

"Don't try to drive back along the main streets, Panayotti. Get back quickly to the Bureau by the quieter streets. I don't want to be away too long "

Yes, Lingfield was right all the time. The French have been trapped. And probably the King has been trapped too. This kind of game is a bit too low for him. No doubt when he offered them the mountain-batteries he did it on the suggestion of one of his advisers. Yes, they would have told him that by doing so he would shake the position of Venizelos with the French. As indeed it did And then the military clique round him played on popular emotion

to such an extent that when the time came to surrender the batteries the King was afraid of the reaction against himself if he complied. They had fed him and the populace with tales of a great Liberal plot to seize Athens with the aid of the French. And now—hullo, what's going on at the Bureau?

"What's going on at the Bureau? Drive fast, Panayotti, there's a battle in progress."

Three or four of the Bureau men are firing from the gate of the Bureau at a squad of Reservists kneeling further up Anaximander Street and firing back at them. One gunman is firing from a window, using the shutter as a shield. Two men are carrying a body through the gate.

John sprang out of the car as it pulled up and ran up the street toward the squad of kneeling Reservists, who stopped firing as he drew near.

"Clear off," he told them. "We don't want any battles in this street."

And much to his surprise they did clear off.

When he reached the Bureau he found that the body was Stavro Priphtes who had been shot through the lung. Vampas in a jelly of fright was bending over the table and probing for the bullet.

"Is he badly wounded?"

Vampas made a gesture of despair.

"Do your best for him."

Another man had been shot through the forearm and another through the shoulder. The rifles had been more effective than the pistols and revolvers of the Bureau men.

John called angrily for Yarrow and Iredale.

"How the devil did this folly happen?"

Somebody had come upstairs with the news that a party of Reservists were dragging a French soldier down the street, and before either of his subalterns could stop them most of the fellows in the Bureau had rushed out to the

rescue. On their way back with the French soldier the Reservists had opened fire on them.

John went down to the big main office where he found at each of the five windows a couple of men with pistols peering through the slats of the shutters

"Hand over every pistol to me," he ordered sharply.

There was no movement to obey

"I'm not going to repeat that order more than once. If the next time I give it you do not all obey immediately, I with Lieutenant Yarrow, Lieutenant Iredale, and Miss Harford shall leave the Bureau and disclaim all further responsibility for your lives and safety. You're in a bad corner, but if you think you can get yourselves out of it better than I can get you out of it, go ahead. Now then, once more, and for the last time hand me your arms. You have till I count ten."

John had not reached that number when the pistols began to clatter on the floor

"Good Iredale, you're responsible for the arms. You'd better have them put in one of the rooms at the back of the house and locked up."

John took Yarrow up to Lingfield's old room, which he was now using himself.

"James, my lad, I wasn't exaggerating when I said we're in a bad corner. They've mounted two more machine-guns, and they've got us well covered. The only chance is to keep quiet. But there's the usual silver lining. If we can get away from here my plan stands a good chance of succeeding."

"What plan?"

"My plan to bring the Cyclades under the Provisional Government."

"Oh, yes, it's almost too easy," Yarrow said sarcastically. "Lingfield is dead. Stavro doesn't look like living through the night. We have about a couple of dozen panic-stricken agents who since you've taken their arms from them have

turned to jelly. We're practically besieged here, with nothing in the house but a few loaves of bread and a jar of olives. Even our telephone is cut off. We stand a good chance of having the place attacked at any moment. And you sit there and say you've a good chance of bringing the Cyclades under the Provisional Government. I wish you'd spent Wednesday night alone in Lingfield's flat and been told by that witch Sophia you had treachery, violence, and death as your fortune. Good god, John, do you realize I'd have been torn to pieces this morning if I hadn't spent the night in this damned Bureau? We thought Wicksteed was the worst thing in the world, but Athens this afternoon is worse."

A loud burst of firing which seemed to come from just outside sent Yarrow to peer through the shutters.

"Don't get nervy, James."

"Don't get nervy? You've been in London. You haven't been waiting in Athens, expecting the worst for the last six weeks."

"Yes, but if my plan comes off we shall have a marvelous time presently. It's much easier now to bring off than it was, just because of all this confusion."

"You're a strange fellow, John. I do wish you'd read the *Chartreuse de Parme*. It would help you to put your character in order. There's a streak of inhumanity in you which you ought to learn how to use. Stendhal could give you a few pointers."

"I will read it when we're settled in Lipsia."

"That's where we secured the expulsion of the German, Austrian, and Turkish Consuls about a fortnight ago for communicating news of shipping to the German Legation here."

"I know. The telegram from Lingfield reached Adelphi Terrace before I left. When I first conceived the plan I thought we'd have to throw them out ourselves. Those consulates are empty, James."

"Presumably "

"And they'll suit us to perfection There are a dozen reasons why we should establish ourselves at Lipsia In the first place it's the chief cable centre in the Aegean. Secondly, it has a dockyard Thirdly it is strategically well placed to centralize the various Spicer Bureaus in one head Bureau. Fourthly, it is strategically well placed for espionage in Greece, and after this flare-up there is a chance of finding ourselves at war with Old Greece. Fifthly, our occupation of Lipsia should mean we can bring the rest of the Cyclades under the Provisional Government at once Sixthly, it is a particularly delightful island. Seventhly, it is far enough from Mudros to keep us fairly clear of the Vice-Admiral under whose august patronage the Spicer Bureau is henceforth to function Eighthly ."

"How are we to get to Lipsia?" Yarrow interrupted

"That's where your next job presents itself," John replied "I'm sorry the telephone is cut off, but I think you'll be perfectly safe driving down to the Piræus. They'll be chary of killing anybody in uniform "

"They weren't very chary about it this morning "

"That was different I didn't have any trouble driving to and from the Legation You'll be quite all right. When you get down to the Piræus go to Barlow's office—it is Barlow, isn't it, who's running the control of the port? R N R fellow?"

"Yes, Commander Barlow "

"Tell him to charter a ship to sail by Monday night for Crete I'm sorry to make you go out with all this wild firing going on, but we must get away as soon as possible, or somebody will think of going to Lipsia first, and that would be a bore "

Yarrow took off his horn-rimmed spectacles and stuck the monocle in his eye

"That's right, James I see you mean business Get

back as soon as you can, and you might try to get hold of some grub for the Bureau Here's a hundred drachmas "

James ought to be all right No need to worry. The only risk is a stray bullet in all this wild firing from windows and roofs But James wasn't meant to be killed. If fortune had planned death for him he would have been left in Lingfield's flat to be torn to pieces Must go and see how Stavro is getting on

"How are you, Stavro?"

Chalk-white his face, and that twelve-inch black moustache drooping now, which gave him the look of a Chinaman

"I am dying, Commander "

"Nonsense, nonsense The hæmorrhage has stopped, Vampas?"

The sleek doctor nodded

"Listen, Stavro You are not dying. If a Bulgarian bullet in the head did not kill you in the last war, a mountaineer from the Epirus is not going to die from a bullet in the lung fired by a Bœotian peasant "

Stavro smiled grimly

"You see I was right, Stavro. If you can smile you are not going to die "

Fugitive Liberals coming in from time to time A long afternoon Panic-shaken Liberals A long afternoon No word of James yet A long afternoon The Piræus would be all right Mostly Liberals there A long afternoon Surely nothing has happened to James? Dusk not far off, though It may be hellish after dark James ought to be back

BOOM!

They've started a bombardment at last Suppose they hit the Parthenon? Better let us all be wiped out than that

"Is that Lieutenant Yarrow? My gad, James, I'm glad

you're back I say, they won't hit the Parthenon with these shells from the fleet, will they?"

"Probably It's a French battleship firing at the garden of the Royal Palace. The Admiral's still shut up in the Zappeion."

"What luck at the Piræus?"

"Barlow has chartered the *Margarita* which will finish unloading on Saturday Things are quiet at the Piræus But fugitives are beginning to stream down from Athens, bringing their furniture with them too The Ministers have gone to remonstrate with the King That's why the French have started plugging shells into the Palace garden They're hoping it will help him to make up his mind to conclude an armistice."

BOOM!

"Did you get any food?"

"Only more bread and olives"

"Couldn't you get sausages or something?"

"All the provision shops in the Piræus were sold out and every shop in Athens has its shutters up."

BOOM!

"What is it, Iredale?"

"Marine Gunton, sir, wishes to report"

A ruffled boy of about nineteen whose uniform was untidy and splashed with mud stood at attention and poured out the tale of how the detachment of British Marines had sat down to have a bit of lunch this morning by the side of the powder-magazine near the cemetery, and of how when they were getting up the Greek soldiers had opened fire on them over a wall and shot down about thirty without any chance of replying. In the confusion he had been cut off from his detachment and had been wandering about all day until somebody had told him there was a naval officer here.

"I wish this damned telephone wasn't cut off."

"It's working again now, sir "

"Get me the Legation. Hulloo, hulloo? Is that the Legation? Ogilvie speaking. Is the Naval Attaché there? Oh, is that you, Arnold? Look here, we've got a Marine at the Bureau. He was separated from his detachment this morning. I'll send him along in the car so that you can arrange to get him back to his ship. Any news? Oh, they're still discussing an armistice? Well, when the Minister gets back I want to see him for a minute or two if possible. Will you give us a ring? Thanks so much. Yes, isn't it? Damned awful!"

BOOM!

John was not successful in reaching the Legation that night, being stopped half-way between it and the Bureau by a patrol. Finally, he heard over the telephone that an armistice had been agreed upon between the King and the Allied Ministers which would be formally proclaimed next morning. No instructions about the future had been received from London.

The night was divided into four-hour watches, John, Iredale, and Yarrow taking turns to sleep on a table in the large office. It passed quietly except for occasional shots in the distance and the arrival of more frightened Liberals to take refuge from what they said was to be the massacre to-morrow.

Next morning the mob, now much more boisterous, was surging up and down the main streets, looting the shops of the Liberals and maltreating the owners, many of whom were dragged off to prison by the soldiers. The Cretans in the house of Venizelos kept up the defence of it until their ammunition gave out, when it was carried by assault. After that the Grande Bretagne Hotel was attacked with rifles and machine-guns, but apart from bullets in all the bedrooms facing the Square not much

damage was done John telephoned to find out if Warburton had taken his advice and removed Rose to the Legation. He had done so. There were no instructions yet from London, but it had been decided that all the British residents were to live on board the big Greek Atlantic liner *Hellas* at present lying at the Piræus. The Legation staff would probably move to one of the warships at Salamis.

When John told Miss Harford that he was sending her down to the Piræus in the car so that she could rejoin her people on board the liner, her pretty face flushed with the determination to do no such thing.

"Are you dissatisfied with my work, Commander Ogilvie?"

"Not at all."

"I thought perhaps you were annoyed with me because I jumped when the bullet hit the side of the window yesterday?"

"Not at all. If I spoke sharply it was because I was nervy myself," said John apologetically.

"Will you not require a stenographer where you are going?"

"I suppose we shall, but . . ."

"Surely in that case I should be more suitable than somebody who is not used to the organization of the Spicer Bureau?"

"Of course."

"Then why am I being sent back to my people?"

"I can't take the responsibility of carting off a young English girl into the unknown."

"And what about poor Stavro?"

"What has Stavro to do with it?"

"I've nursed him through till now, and this morning he is definitely better. I don't wish to let him out of my care until he is out of danger."

"But you have your people to consider."

"I am earning my own living. Before we leave the Piræus for wherever we are going I shall have an opportunity to tell my people that our headquarters have been changed. That is all they require to know."

"You really want to come with us?"

"Certainly I want to come with you," Commander Lingfield said. "she hesitated and blinked away a tear. "Commander Lingfield always said I worked well, and I think Lieutenant Yarrow will give me a good character. You're prejudiced against me because I lost my self-control for a few minutes yesterday."

"I'm not prejudiced in the least on that account," John assured her. "My only prejudice is against taking a pretty girl away from Athens without being sure where we are all going to end."

"Is Athens such an attractive health resort at the moment?" The sooner I get away from it the better I shall be pleased."

"But, Miss Harford, you must realize that you will be the only woman with a lot of men."

"I understood that you were taking the families of all our people with you, Commander Ogilvie."

"What?" John gasped in consternation, and rang the bell for Dr Vampas, who entered apprehensively, rubbing one fat hand against the other.

"You desire to speak to me, my commander?"

"What's this Miss Harford tells me about the men taking their families with them when we leave for Crete?"

The Doctor flung himself on his knees, and before John knew what he was going to do had seized his hand and was kissing it hard.

"My wife and my six daughters!" he wailed. "Have I saved them from the Turks to hand them over to these bloodstained ruffians in Athens? Have I, with the help of his Excellency Mr Stern the British Consul, saved them from death and worse in Mileto to lose them now? Have

mercy, my commander, on the father of six daughters Have mercy on the faithful husband of a faithful wife, and allow them to come with me How can they live without me to protect them?"

"You can stay behind in Athens and protect them," John suggested

Doctor Miltiades Vampas uttered a howl of despair

"Stay behind in Athens and be murdered for my services to the Entente?" he wailed, beating his breast "You cannot be speaking seriously, most noble commander"

John consulted James Yarrow

"You may just as well take them—wives, families and mistresses," he was told. "If they're left behind we shall have to spend half our time making arrangements to get them over to Lipsia It will mean endless letters And you'd certainly better hang on to Miss Harford. She's first-class"

John gave way

Sunday was spent in packing Early on Monday morning a lorry was secured to move the contents of the Bureau down to the Piræus, in journey after journey through streets busy now with military patrols making a grand display of maintaining order. The lust for vengeance upon the Liberals seemed slaked for the moment. The mob had melted

There were still no instructions from London at the Legation, for there was nobody with eyes for anything else except the political chessboard where Mr Lloyd George, a black pawn on the verge of queening, looked like being swept off the seventh square by the white queen, Mr Asquith, unless the black rook, Mr Bonar Law, could ward her off

John was much too busy with the evacuation of the Bureau to bother about the silence of London. Indeed, he welcomed it It left him free to develop his counter-attack.

The quaysides of the Piræus were thronged with fugitives from the vengeance of the Royalists, and heaped high with furniture and baggage. One might have supposed that they were fugitives from the interior of Asia Minor fleeing from the Turks.

The *Margarita* was lying at anchor in the middle of the harbour, riding high in the water after unloading her cargo. Four other ships were taking in refugees and the big liner *Hellas* was already filled with the British residents. The general feeling was that war with Old Greece was now inevitable.

The news that the *Margarita* was proceeding to Lipsia instead of Crete was common knowledge now, and John found her crowded not merely with the members of the Bureau and their families, but with a heterogeneous crowd of political fugitives as well, including some prominent Venizelist business men. He gave orders as soon as he went on board that not another passenger was to be carried, for the ship was already overcrowded, and with the decks piled with furniture he was afraid of her capsizing should there be a sudden panic. She was due to sail at five o'clock, and he gave orders that at four o'clock every passenger was to go below and remain below until Lipsia was reached. He stationed Iredale forward and Yarrow aft with instructions to remain on deck all night and keep the passengers below. In the event of a rush they were not to hesitate to fire. He himself went on the bridge, for he had not much trust in the ability of the ship's officers to maintain discipline in the event of a genuine submarine attack or a panic from an imaginary one.

At five minutes to five, as preparations were being made to raise the anchor, the chug-chug of a motor-boat was heard approaching across the now dusky waters of the harbour, and presently the sound of the *Margarita* being hailed.

"I'll take no more passengers aboard," John shouted to

one of the ship's officers who with a couple of the crew was leaning over the rail talking to the people in the motor-boat

The officer came up on the bridge to say that Kyrios Gadrilakis, a well-known Venizelist shipowner, begged a passage to Lipsia for himself, his wife, his two daughters, and two friends

"Not another passenger," he said angrily "We haven't enough life-belts for a quarter of those on board I won't take another "

Then he saw Yarrow beckoning to him from the side of the ship, and cursing him for not having the strength of mind to refuse firmly he went down

"I won't take another person Damn it, James, you ought to have too much sense to argue "

But Yarrow continued to argue

"Look here, Gadrilakis has been a great friend of ours After all, six more people won't make any difference, and if we do get torpedoed we haven't enough boats to save all the women anyhow. I think we ought to take them on board "

"But we've turned away a hundred already during the last hour "

Without noticing it, John had drawn near to the side of the ship and looking over involuntarily he saw the motor-boat and what was more weakening to his state of mind the occupants He might have refused Gadrilakis himself, a tubby little man with a round florid face, or Madame Gadrilakis, a stout swarthy little woman, or the hatless young man in the bows with a tight curly head of straw-coloured hair, but to refuse the three girls was beyond him.

"I am so very much obliged to you, Commander Ogilvie," said the tubby little shipowner, speaking correct English with a strong accent "Permit me to present Madame Gadrilakis, and our friends Miss Helena Roussos and Mr Basil Roussos." John shook hands with a very

fair girl of about nineteen, an ethereal creature whose great grey starry eyes were liquid with emotional gratitude, obviously the sister of the hatless young man "And my younger daughter Philia He shook hands with a trim girl of perhaps fifteen whose jet-black hair was tied with a large bow as bright as a poppy "And my elder daughter Zoe " He saw a girl of seventeen or eighteen whose complexion and hair seemed to stain the dusk like the lingering rose and copper of sunset, and as he took her hand the exhaustion of four nerve-racking days vanished in one instant of brimming vitality which flooded all his being

"I've fallen in love," he felt he was saying aloud, and dropped the hand he was holding as if its glove had concealed an asp, lest any of those standing round might have noticed the way this girl's eyes had met his in a flash of blue fire

"Well, we had to make an exception for you, Mr Gadrilakis *Zoe Gadrilakis* I know what a good friend you were to Commander Lingfield *Zoe mou, se agapō* James, couldn't we let them have that small smoke-room on the after-deck where we put our things? *Zoe* *Zoe* Yes, you'll be more comfortable there *Maid of Athens, e'er we part* No, you won't be turning us out. Lieutenant Yarrow, Lieutenant Iredale, and myself will be on deck all night *But from this maid of Athens there shall be no parting* Yes, you see, with all these poor souls in such a nervous state after this ferocious business there might be a panic, and we are very high in the water *By those tresses unconfined woo'd by each Aegean wind* I had hoped we should have one of the Provisional Government's destroyers to help us deal with the Lipsia Royalists, but apparently the French have taken over the whole of the Greek light squadron *Byron's Maid of Athens was dark like Zoe's sister, not this rose and auburn loveliness.* However, I doubt if they will run the risk of resisting.

We landed a party from a British destroyer about a fortnight ago and took away the German, Austrian, and Turkish Consuls Zoe . *life!* I wonder if you're as hungry as I am A pie? Oh, that's splendid Yes, I'll have a slice on deck Zoe *life!* But you'll excuse me now? The anchor's weighed *And I am not flying to Istambol.* It's coming on to rain You'd better go along to the little smoke-room Zoe *mou, se agapō.* *Byron made a howler when he wrote 'sais agapō'.* *I shall never think of you, Zoe, except in the second person singular* James, will you show Mr and Mrs Gadrilakis where they can stow themselves?"

The Gadrilakis party followed Yarrow along to the quarters assigned to them John went up on the bridge again The brief dusk turned to night There was no wind, but a fine rain was falling, and in a slow swell from the south the *Margarita* rolled uncomfortably The moon was nearly full and diffused through the moist clouds a melancholy grey twilight over the sea

When John had been on the bridge for a couple of hours Iredale came up to report that everybody below seemed to have settled down quietly, and suggested that John should turn in and have two or three hours' sleep.

"Yarrow and I can look after things, sir "

"No, I won't turn in, but if you can rig me up with a deck-chair just forward of the bridge, you and Yarrow can take alternate four-hour watches We shall be off Lipsia by three o'clock and then we can all turn in until daylight "

Thus it was arranged. John drowsed away in his chair. It was idle to speculate what would happen in Lipsia tomorrow morning The only definite plan he had was to send Mervyn Iredale ashore as soon as it was light with orders to wake Warwick the Consul and telephone across to Grazia to ask Theodore Ladas to come in at once and consult with him what was the best way to deal with the

sixty gendarmes who held Lipsia for their King, not to mention any Reservists who might have been served out with ammunition. Curious, but since that girl came on board he felt no apprehensions about to-morrow. Everything seemed bound somehow to be all right. Yet what if a submarine's periscope were at this very moment rearing its ugly little dark neck just ahead of them? He gazed to port and starboard across the heaving sea like oxidized silver in the drenched moonlight. Nothing. How small she was! Like a Tanagra figurine. Curious that in Lipsia he should have thought about love again, and that now on his way back there he should meet this girl. And it was high time that his emotions *should* be stirred by something else than the warfare of these last two and a half years. Warfare with pen, warfare with tongue, and real warfare for a while on the Peninsula. But always fighting to get something done or stop somebody else's doing something. All right for a time, but it had been going on too long. He mustn't start taking himself too seriously like Freddie Rodney, but all the same it was becoming clear that war was incompatible with any kind of mental or emotional energy which was not entirely devoted to some kind of destructive action. Those months at Gallipoli had been marvellous, but what about the poor devils in the trenches some of whom had had two and a half years with death always at their elbow? And it looked at present as if they might easily have another two and a half years of such an existence.

But he had not deliberately sought for love as a stimulant from the exhaustion brought about by an endless pre-occupation with some form of action. When he had hurried down from the bridge this afternoon he had had but one idea in his head, which was to send Gadrilakis off with a flea in his ear. Then those three girls looking up anxiously at the side of the *Margarita*—one ethereal and fair, one darker than the falling dusk, and one glowing

through that dusk like a rose-bloomed lantern Was it for her alone he went back on his own strict order, or was it still for the three of them? Had he loved her even in the instant of first beholding her, or had it been in the instant when her father said 'this is my elder daughter Zoe' and she had given him her gloved hand? That was a subtlety of distinction upon which it was sweet to meditate after meditating for so long upon the abrupt appearance of a Bulgarian regiment on a part of the front where it had no business to be or the whereabouts of a dangerous enemy agent or the means of administering checks to Henry Woburn Wicksteed or the amount of expenses he had been overcharged by some bonehead of an agent he had tried to send into Constantinople and who was more concerned to prove that the adventure had cost him three times as much as it had than to discover any useful information about the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* Surely destiny could not have presented him with Zoe for his imagination to feed on in order to send one of those damned submarines to torpedo him and her and all the rest of them out of this world? They must be approaching the entrance of the Zea Channel now This was a bad spot. He gazed again to port and starboard through the dim drenched moonlight Nothing Nothing except the dulled silver of that long swell, the rolling in which was not too pleasant He would not care to take an oath that he was not feeling rather seasick Or perhaps it was merely the emptiness after the bread and olives of the last four days Was he passing from that nightmare of Athens to another nightmare at Lipsia in the morning? At that moment he heard voices coming along the deck abaft. He looked angrily around from his chair to find out who was disobeying his orders and saw Zoe Gadrilakis and the hatless young man with the light straw-coloured curls. What on earth was she carrying? It looked like a plate

"Please, Commander Ogilvie, my father has told me to

bring to you something for eat And it is a very good pie, please "

She spoke very slowly and carefully as if she were practising her English in the schoolroom for the critical ears of a mistress, but to John it was the voice of some Muse mysteriously travelling to the Cyclades in this overcrowded Greek steamer

"Now that *is* kind of you! I *was* feeling hungry "

"And here is a bottle of *retzinato* and a glass," the young man added

"This is wonderful But you two mustn't stay on deck This drizzle is wetter than it feels "

"Drizzle? What is that?" she turned to ask her companion

John in what he feared was a spirit of ridiculous competition, to which was added a touch of complacency over his command of modern Greek, hastily translated before Basil Roussos could come to her aid

She clapped her hands in delight

"But you are speaking so very well Oh, I am so pleased because I can say only small things in English "

Her brown tweed overcoat was already glistening with the moisture He must be firm and send her back to shelter Besides, he was not setting a good example of discipline

"Can we be sunk by a submarine?" she asked "I would be very very frightened "

"Oh no, we shall be all right *Seven ships sunk within a few miles of here during the last fortnight* The submarines are not working round here at present *Zoe, you really are enchanting!* And now you must go back to the smoke-room We shall be off Lipsia by three o'clock I'm going to enjoy this pie. I shall see you in the morning."

As they turned away John was thinking with exhilaration that the morning should be the prelude of many and many a day in the course of which somehow somewhere

he should see Zoe. And then watching them walk aft along the deck he was stabbed by jealousy because she had taken the arm of her companion. Certainly, the ship high in the water was rolling heavily, but she had seemed to take his arm so much as a matter of course. Was there between them an understanding, perhaps even an engagement? Had he fallen in love with her only to find he had fallen in love with a girl whose heart was not free? Was he in fact on the verge of making a fool of himself? Why should he expect her to be heartfree? That kind of tight curly hair was extremely attractive to many girls. He had noticed in London how the vogue for it was growing. He was very young though, hardly more than twenty. Too young probably for the parents to recognize a positive engagement. Was he a rich young man? It was difficult to gauge anybody's worldly prosperity after being chivvied round Athens for four days by Bœotian Reservists. Even Gadrilakis himself who was a man of considerable wealth had looked pretty down and out sitting in that motor-boat alongside the *Margarita*. Perhaps they were just friends. They might be cousins. That might account for the familiar way in which she had taken his arm. And the boat *was* rolling heavily. Taking his arm in such circumstances by no means necessarily implied any particular affection. And after all the very fact that he and his sister shared the boat with the Gadrilakis family pointed to a long-established friendship.

John's spirits mounted as he ate the pie and drank the resin-flavoured wine. By the time he had finished his much-needed meal the capture of Lipsia seemed as easy as taking the ace of hearts with a small trump, the spring and summer spread before him, with hours snatched here and there from work to spend with Zoe, the young man with the tight straw-coloured curls had completely vanished; and he could now take an oath that he was not feeling in the very least seasick.

The dangerous hunting-ground for submarines round the Zea Channel was left behind. The odds were now definitely against being torpedoed. The soft rain on his face was like a kiss from Zoe as he faded into sleep to be wakened by the sound of the anchor being dropped in dead calm water off the mole of the harbour of Lipsia. The rain had ceased. He was too sleepy to move from under the rugs, and when he woke again it was to a sky overcast with a monotone of cloud, to see that the island had emerged from night to a grey windless December morning. There were the twin conical hills scaled with houses to their summits and so tranquil-seeming that it was hard to believe the Catholic hill, stoutly Royalist and pro-Austrian, might within the next few hours be at war with the Orthodox hill whereon lay the strength of Liberalism in Lipsia. Beyond those two populous hills, above the lower part of the town built round the harbour, the range that ran from north-east to south-west across the middle of the island rose starkly. And . . . and, yes, by all the gods and goddesses of Hellas, there was a grey ship flying the White Ensign at the stern. In his excitement and relief John forgot even about Zoe Gadrilakis. He flung off the rugs, hurried below, was given a refreshing shave by one of the men attached to the Bureau who in time of peace was a barber, told Yarrow to see that nobody went ashore until the *Margarita* was moored inside the harbour, and calling for Iredale to accompany him rowed off in a boat to what turned out to be His Majesty's sloop *Snapdragon*, with a huge genial Cornishman in command. Trehawke was a man over forty, though only a two-and-a-half striper who had retired from the Service some years before the war on inheriting a small estate in the Meneage. It is not a habit of people with Cornish or Highland blood in their veins to keep quiet about it, and it was not long before John had let Trehawke know he was a Pendarves on his mother's side.

"One and all That's the stuff," roared the captain of the *Snapdragon* "By Tre, Pol, and Pen, ye shall know the Cornishmen, and by Tre, Pol, and Pen, we'll knock sparks out of these Tinoite ruffians What's the programme, boy?"

They were sitting in the wardroom at a breakfast which obliterated whatever was left by that slice of pie last night to obliterate of the memory of four days on bread and olives

"The first thing is to get hold of a topping fellow here called Theodore Ladas, who lives on the other side of the island with two extremely pretty daughters in a delightful house"

"Good!" roared Trehawke "Good!! I like the sound of daughters Better than the sound of waters, what?"

At which he sat back in his chair and laughed till the crockery on the mess-table rattled.

John laughed too not so much at the joke as at the fancy of the captain of the *Snapdragon* bellowing at Theodore Ladas and Theodore Ladas bellowing back at him. Emeris, the rather fragile-looking Lieutenant who was second-in-command, would look more fragile than ever, for he evidently suffered from these high spirits at eight o'clock of a grey December morning

So after breakfast Iredale was sent ashore to get in touch with Consul Warwick and telephone for Theodore Ladas to drive in from the country as soon as possible and give the benefit of his advice about the best way to swing round Lipsia and the rest of the Cyclades to the Provisional Government of National Defence.

"I'm out for blood," Trehawke declared "Have a gin and bitters? No? Too early? Well, it's a rotten wet day Yes, I was just on my way to Suda Bay when Buzfuz signalled me to put in here in case of trouble."

Buzfuz John gathered was the Vice-Admiral. Later he was to learn that the name was not inappropriate. John

gave Trehawke an account of what had happened in Athens, and the Navy vowed revenge

"Buzfuz didn't commit me to any line of action," Trehawke announced "And if the Tinoites here make trouble, by George, my boy, I'll give 'em all the trouble they want. And then some Look here, you'd better have a brandy It's damned muggy weather, you know Darbyshire, bring Commander Ogilvie a brandy And I think I'll have one too Emeris, what about you?"

"No, thank you, sir "

"Then you'd better make it a double brandy, Darbyshire, for me and Commander Ogilvie Nothing like brandy for drawing the water out of a man, and you must have swallowed a hell of a lot of water last night if you slept on deck with your mouth open When were you last in Cornwall?"

"Not for some years The people who have my grandfather's place aren't very amusing "

"It's up near Bodmin, eh? That's some way from the Meneage Well, here's our brandy One and all, and hurrah for jolly old Venizelos Damn it, the man's a bloody good sportsman Cheero!"

And after this toast he swallowed the brandy in one glorious gulp

Fortunately for John's efforts to resist the hospitality of the *Snapdragon's* skipper Consul Warwick soon arrived on board, and not long after him Theodore Ladas in such a state of excitement that he seemed to float up the ship's ladder and alight on the deck like the Byzantine eagle itself

"This is superb! This is grand! This is simply magnificent!" he shouted

And to John in what was intended to be an aside, but what was actually the normal tone of an ordinary man's conversation, Trehawke observed.

"I like this egg This is a damned good egg, old boy.

This is as good an egg as I've come across yet in the Aegean. Will you have a gin and bitters, Mr Ladas?"

"I'd rather have a brandy, if I may"

"That's the stuff," Trehawke bellowed "Darbyshire, bring four double brandies—five double brandies," he added, noticing young Iredale in the background

"No, no, no," John put in hastily "Not for me, and not for Iredale"

"And not for me," said Consul Warwick whose rich sense of the ridiculous was making his beard twitch with hardly controlled mirth

"I sent round word to some of our friends," Ladas announced. "Good fellows all They'll be on board soon. It's a council of war, eh? By Jove, I'm feeling about eighteen again"

"This egg is the best I've struck in years," Trehawke affirmed in another audible whisper to John

Other Liberals now arrived, and it was decided to eliminate immediately all the prominent Royalists on the island. The Nomarch of the Cyclades, the Demarch of Lipsia, the Judge, the Public Prosecutor, the Director of the Commercial School, the Head Wireless Operator, and three or four of the important merchants were proscribed. Invitations were issued to lunch on board the *Snapdragon* from which lunch they did not return home, being accommodated in the sloop until they could be despatched to Salonica to make their peace with the Provisional Government. Then a telegram was sent urging on M. Venizelos the necessity of a formal occupation of Lipsia by troops of the Provisional Government. That afternoon John went ashore and took possession of the empty consulates of Germany, Austria, and Turkey. In the German Consulate he established a censorship. In the Austrian Consulate overlooking the quay he established the Spicer Bureau. In the Turkish Consulate he established himself, Yarrow, and Iredale. A pro-

climation was read in the great marble square of Lipsia that the Cyclades were under British control. Three days later a platoon of Provisional Government troops and a hundred Cretan gendarmes arrived from Salonica, and in pouring rain the adherence of Lipsia and the Cyclades to the Provisional Government was enthusiastically cheered by a large crowd.

It was a good moment for decisive action. In Athens the diplomats were too busily engaged in handling the difficult situation which had arisen between Old Greece and the Entente to bother about what was happening in the Cyclades under the patronage of the British Navy. The strict blockade which the Allies had applied cut off all communication with the mainland. In London the politicians were too busily engaged with the intrigues for places in the new Lloyd George Government to bother about what was happening anywhere, least of all in the Cyclades. It was in that scramble that a Mr Stanley Baldwin, the Conservative member for Bewdley, pulled himself inconspicuously out of the ruck by becoming a Junior Lord of the Treasury. By the end of January when Mr Balfour, who had succeeded Lord Grey at the Foreign Office, brought his mind to bear on the problem of the Cyclades, all he could do was to promise the King of Greece that no more islands should adhere to the Provisional Government. However, as by that time every island had done so and as the Provisional Government had been recognized by the despatch of a British Minister to Salonica it was not a nutritious promise. And by the end of January Mr Baldwin had become Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

John's quarters in the old Turkish Consulate were in a large high rectangular room, the ceiling of which had been painted with an elaborate floriated pattern in red and blue. In the centre was a crude and conventional classical

landscape and in the four corners were portraits of the saviours of Greece—Byron, Ypsilanti, Mavrocordato, and Miaoulis. The work must have been carried through in a spasm of patriotic rejoicing soon after the security of Greek independence was assured. The furniture consisting of a bed veiled in a mosquito-net, a desk, a wardrobe, a washing-stand, a chest of drawers, three cane-seated chairs and two wicker armchairs seemed sparse in so large and so high a room. The floor of polished boards, bare except for a small much-worn Macedonian rug beside the bed and a couple of rush mats, added to the severity of the effect, for so high was the ceiling that unless one was lying on one's back its richness of colour and pattern was lost in the prevailing whiteness of the walls. There were three windows, the middle one very large and opening upon a balcony which overlooked a garden on the other side of the road sloping sharply to the sea.

Upon a serene and cloudless February morning John and James Yarrow were leaning over the parapet of this balcony and gazing silently at the semicircle of nearer islands. On this day of cerulean clarity even the peaks of Samos were visible over ninety miles away. In the garden below, an almond-tree in full blossom lent an added depth of azure to the sea by the interposition of its sprays of flesh-pink flowers between sea and land.

"Well," John said dreamily, "I think we can claim that the Control is working smoothly everywhere at last. And now it's time to see about co-ordinating all these Spicer Bureaus scattered round the Aegean. I've asked Wade to authorize me to charter that yacht right away. The Admiral has more or less promised to arm it for us, and in April we will start collecting Bureaus. I thought we'd got rid of that fellow Halliwell, but I hear he's back and causing Stern a good deal of trouble. I've stymied him for the present, but he's a bit of a Wicksteed in blue, and it doesn't do to let these fellows get a start."

"What a passion you have for accumulating responsibility," Yarrow said "Yet as far as I can make out you're not really keen on authority for authority's sake "

"No, I'm keen on it for efficiency's sake," John replied "Telephone when you get to the Bureau if there's anything urgent to fetch me down Otherwise I propose to spend my first idle morning since I was last in London "

"You'd better start the *Chartreuse de Parme*," Yarrow advised

"Perhaps, James," he said, with a smile "But I think I'd rather start it to-night after my lazy day I feel too luxuriously idle this morning even to read "

When James Yarrow had gone John dragged one of the wicker-chairs out on the balcony and sat absorbing with body and mind the serenity of that February sunlight. It was time now to think seriously of carrying matters further with Zoe In the stress of the last ten weeks he had had to leave that exquisite possibility in a state of suspended animation. One stormy December evening he had seen her and her sister Philia and Helena Roussos run from the wind and the rain in the square to take refuge in a confectioner's, and on the spur of the moment he had followed them and insisted on presenting each of the girls with a box of chocolates But young Basil Roussos had come in a few minutes afterwards, looking much agitated because he had missed them, and from the moment he had come in Zoe had seemed to turn self-conscious, and it had been Helena and young Philia who had done all the talking He had parted with them that evening vowing to himself that even a mild interest in young Greek maidens was incompatible with his work and that to let himself fall in love with one was madness. And there had indeed been so much to do in those first weeks (to look back on which from the smooth-running methodical affair that the British Control Bureau had now become was to look back on a

fever) that he had successfully put Zoe out of his head, leaving her as it were asleep for a while within his heart

What a time it had been¹ Mervyn Iredale landing from an armed drifter on one island at two o'clock of a streaming December night and leading twelve brigands to break into the house of Colonel Psyllas, the most militant Royalist in the Cyclades, and carry him wrapped in blankets down from bed to the drifter to be shipped off to Salonica. James Yarrow tramping twenty miles across the hills of another island to capture the Royalist tax-collector and over a thousand pounds' worth of mixed coins, from Venetian ducats and *louis d'or* to English sovereigns. Seizing the presses of the Royalist newspaper in Lipsia and turning them over to the editorial staff of one of the Liberal papers which had been suppressed in Athens. Loading up the *Margarita* with flour and making a tour of the Cyclades, unloading it where the inhabitants adhered to the Provisional Government and moving on to the next island where they persisted in acclaiming the King. And then loading up the *Margarita* again and touring round again to find if a fortnight without flour had had any influence upon political opinion, and finding invariably that it had had a profound influence and that those who had shouted loudest for the King now shouted more loudly still for Venizelos.

Inviting the Commandant of the Gendarmerie to tea in his little office at the former Austrian Consulate and taking his pistol out of his belt with one hand while he was helping the poor man to sugar with the other. Sending for the rest of the gendarmes in batches of six to come down to the Bureau because their Commandant was making arrangements about patrols and disarming them as they came in through the narrow entrance until there were four officers shut up in the Consulate's old drawing-room and sixty gendarmes shut up in the kitchen. And an hour later in wind and rain the arrival of two hundred pea-green

Venizelist soldiers and a hundred Cretan gendarmes with astrakhan caps who had been sick all the way from Salonica and whose Colonel looked as if he had been dropped in the sea and dragged along at the stern of the troopship like bait at the end of a line. Gradual recovery of the seasick warriors and their Colonel. Interview of the Colonel with the imprisoned gendarmes when he had had a wash and a shave and a stirring patriotic address at the conclusion of which they were invited one after another to make their choice. Those who elected to adhere to the Provisional Government had been embraced and given back their arms. Those who refused had been sent up to Salonica. And the result had been a tie—two officers and thirty men on each side.

Proclamation of the Provisional Government in the marble-paved square presided over by the statue of some dead patriot of the War of Independence. Speeches by the new Nomarch and the Colonel commanding the troops. Speeches by Theodore Ladas and Bill Trehawke which rivalled the thunder that was reverberating in the skies above. Riding up the steep alleys of the Latin hill on a donkey, because he could not walk with the rheumatism brought on by that night on the *Margarita*, to interview the Catholic Bishop and warn his Lordship that he would be held personally responsible if his flock continued to take pot-shots with rifles at the Orthodox hill throughout the night. Riding up the equally steep alleys on the Orthodox hill to interview the Orthodox Archbishop and warn his Beatitude that he would be held personally responsible if his flock continued to fire back at the Latin hill. Riding down again and thinking to himself that the Catholic Bishop, neat, suave, clean-shaven and Italianate, had seemed chiefly concerned with the advantage to his flock of non-resistance and that the Orthodox Archbishop, hairy as a mammoth and nearly as large, had seemed chiefly concerned with the advantage to himself of what-

ever advice he gave to those for whom he was spiritually responsible

Notification to the Army at Salonica that a censorship had been imposed in Lipsia, the only acknowledgment of which was the opening of all his own correspondence and that of his officers by the Salonica military censorship. Reprisals ordered, and every letter for British and French generals, even those for General Sarrail himself, opened by the Lipsia censors. Surrender of the British military censorship in Salonica and recognition by them of the Lipsia censorship, which was under the patronage of Headquarters at Cairo, where what was left of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force was only too anxious to strike a blow at that prodigal child in Salonica which had disowned its father. Private letter from Major Henry Woburn Wicksteed to let him know in the strictest confidence that his action in opening General Sarrail's letters had caused a great deal of unpleasantness. Despatch to Major Henry Woburn Wicksteed of a long wooden spoon he had seen in a Lipsia shop with a label attached on which was written '*For you when next you sup with the devil.*'

Visit from Vice-Admiral Sir William Cordell, K C B, who had danced about the room like a *Punch* admiral and lectured him for half an hour on the irregular proceedings of himself and Trehawke in seizing Lipsia, at the end of which Buzfuz speech he had suddenly turned completely genial and declared his willingness to take under his protection all the Spicer Bureaus in the Aegean, provided they were co-ordinated under one central branch in regular communication with himself and his chief Intelligence officer Lt-Colonel Braddon, R M A. Suggestion by himself that at first suitable moment he should have an armed yacht for maintaining communication between the various islands, and acceptance by the Vice-Admiral of this suggestion provided he

was not asked to supply the yacht Brief but cordial telegram from Wade at Adelphi Terrace refusing nothing that would help the Spicer Bureau to assert itself in the Aegean and by implication demonstrate to the Military in Salonica that he laughs best who laughs last

Visit from the French Naval Attaché, a little depressed because the *coup de main* in Lipsia had brought it within the sphere of the British Navy and that except at Milo and in Salonica itself the French had now been pushed out of any naval base in the Aegean. However, he would send an *officier de liaison* to Lipsia, having always heard what a fine spirit of *camaraderie* had marked his *cher collègue's* relations with the French Military authorities at Salonique. He was very content to see on his breast the ribbon of the Croix de Guerre, and it would look even better with the palms added. And that poor Lingfield. He should always think of him with affection and wished he had lived to wear the ribbon of the Legion d'Honneur, which it had been intended to confer on him for his work in Athens. Visit from the Italian Military Attaché who was convinced that John had enough intelligence to see how closely Italian interests in the Aegean were bound up with British interests and that the main object of both at present should be to prevent any extension of French influence, since after all the war must come to an end some time and it was important to keep an eye on that time. He was surprised to notice that John was not wearing an Italian decoration. Meanwhile he would send an Italian liaison officer to Lipsia, *intelligente assai*, a native of Smyrna. Visits from all sorts and conditions of people.

And then the arrival of various officers sent out to him to take charge of the interests of over twenty islands, to oversee the control of every port, to register every fishing-boat and regulate its goings and comings, to grant permits for every inter-island traveller, to arrange with the Navy for the rationing of them while the blockade of Old Greece

was maintained, to examine every parcel that arrived and left, to initiate and invigilate a system of coast-watching, to do everything possible to help defeat the German submarine effort which was growing stronger every week and already threatened to make the winning of the war an impossibility. Some of these officers had been good, some not so good. Kellaway was splendid. Patient, plodding Kellaway who sat up half the night, disentangling the mass of minor problems which this control of islands produced. A man with a fine brain who allowed it to be overwhelmed by the inessential and gave himself twice as much work as was necessary. Unlike James Yarrow who had once told Kellaway that his mind was a long unresolved set of algebraical brackets. So serious always, dear Kellaway. Still full of a romantic idealism about the war and applying that romantic idealism to the most sordid problems that arose from having to put too much power into the hands of people morally incapable of using it wisely and honourably, Kellaway bore upon his round shoulders the sins of all the port-controls. A pound of sugar smuggled through for a bribe weighed him down to earth. And Gretton was splendid. Administering the most difficult island of the lot, an island where at first as soon as the flour had been landed a crowd of superb brigands had descended from the hills and carried it off. But Gretton by himself had stalked off to the brigands' fastness, a walled village overhanging a ravine, and by sheer force of personality mastered them. He had been working for Wade in South America when war broke out and had finally returned home to do some fighting. It had been difficult to persuade him to come out here, but what a stand-by he was! And Hinks! Who except Wade would have thought that a little Cockney clerk like Hinks was fit to administer islands? But he could, by Jove he could! And he controlled one of the most important islands of the lot.

But some of his other officers had not been quite so good. Perhaps he should have been wiser to keep them immediately under his own eye and send away James Yarrow and Mervyn Iredale and Charles Kellaway to the outlying posts. But he couldn't part with James, and young Iredale was so very useful in dealing with ruffled feelings in Lipsia. Besides, Majendie, the new S N O, was fond of him. Moreover, it *was* essential that in Lipsia itself the administrative side of the Spicer Bureau should be exemplary.

And things were running smoothly at last. As soon as he could get the yacht and link up the more remote Spicer branches by regular inter-communication it might fairly be held up as a model piece of organization. Not much likelihood of war with Old Greece now, and James Yarrow could concentrate again on the Turkish Intelligence. Things would probably soon get lively in Palestine, and there was still a notion of a sudden attack on Smyrna with the idea of cutting the Turkish communications and holding the Baghdad railway.

Yes, there had been enough to do and enough to think about to make it necessary to put Zoe out of his mind during those wet windy months of perpetual effort. But now spring was here, and on days when there was no bag from Mudros or Malta or Athens or Salonica or London, no telegrams from Rome or Gibraltar or Berne or Marseilles, an hour might be snatched for idleness. And he had the assurance from Philia Gadrilakis that her sister took more than a casual interest in his interest. There had been that Christmas party in the *Snappdragon* when Trehawke had collected all the 'tootsie-wootsies' of Lipsia for a farewell dance before much to his disgust he had to relinquish the Lipsia area of the Aegean to Captain Majendie and His Majesty's light-cruiser *Catapult*.

"Damn Buzfuz, old boy, I was just beginning to enjoy myself here, and we'd have had lots of fun this summer.

That kid Helena Roussos is a peach. If I weren't married, dashed if I wouldn't have proposed to her."

It had been a jolly party, and it was when he was dancing with Philia that she had looked up, her dark eyes glowing with a worldly knowledge far in advance of what would be expected in one whose hair was still tied in a scarlet bow, and said swaying nearer to him in the waltz that was being played by the Lipsia Dance Orchestra, "You like Zoe very much, yes?" And he had felt himself aware of blushing absurdly at this direct question from a chit of a flapper when he announced that he liked her extremely. "And she likes you very much," Philia had murmured, swaying still closer with the rhythm of the waltz

"How old is she?"

"She was eighteen not long now."

"Isn't Basil Roussos in love with her?"

"Oh, yes, Vasili is quite mad for her, but she does not like him so much. Only she is so sorry for him because he is quite ill to love her, and he is useful like perhaps a brother. He does many messages and things like that."

"She wouldn't get a brother to run messages for her."

"We have not a brother, so we do not know what brothers can do. But Vasili can take us to such a dance as to-night. And little Greek girls must not go alone to parties because Greek peoples have such terrible tongues. They would make bad scandals of us."

"Well, when we are less busy at the Bureau we must give a dance for little Greek girls."

"Now you laugh to me."

"No, I'm not laughing at you. I think you're sweet."

"And I think *you* are sweet."

After that waltz he had gone over to talk to Euphrosyne and Aglaia Ladas, who had teased him about his funny little partner

"Isn't she the daughter of that plump little shipowner

from the Piræus?" Euphrosyne had asked so loftily that he had been nettled into high praise of Gadrilakis

"I am not criticizing him, John I'm sure he is very agreeable in his way"

"But terribly common," Aglaia had put in "And this sister who is always followed around by that youth who looks like a frightened sheep, she would really be very pretty if she had better style"

How furious he had been with them both, so furious that for two Sundays he had not driven out to Grazia to lunch, pleading excess of work as an excuse. Still, Grazia was too pleasant a refuge to be given up because Euphrosyne and Aglaia had not understood that he was in love with Zoe Gadrilakis, and that only the stress of his work led him to keep that love in a state of suspended animation. If time, this spring and summer time, should give Zoe the chance to love him, and if he should make up his mind to marry her . . .

To marry her?

John sat upright in the wicker-chair and gazed in amazement at the semicircle of blue and green and grey islands dreaming like great birds upon that calm sea.

"Marriage?"

He had not thought about marrying anybody since seventeen years ago he had wanted to marry Rose Medlicott. Marriage had never entered his head in connection with any of his love-affairs. The knowledge that Gabrielle had thought of marriage had been enough to break even that long liaison. And now suddenly, after passing the last ten weeks with no more than two conversations with Zoe and smiling to her and Philia when sometimes from the windows of this room he had seen them walking up the road toward the house their father had rented somewhere further along, now suddenly the thought of marriage had been definitely stated in his mind. Strange how the subconscious mind could play happily with an

idea while the conscious mind was immersed in affairs. Had the thought of marriage been born in that moment he first saw her sitting in the motor-boat alongside the *Margarita* in the harbour of the Piræus? And if it had been born the subconscious mind had displayed a nice sense of behaviour. Clearly he could not embark on a love-affair with a girl of eighteen unless he were prepared to regard marriage as the end of it. But not too soon. Let there be for a while the illusion of love without a full stop like marriage. Moreover, he must know her much better before a word was said about marriage. He must be sure that this revolution of his attitude toward life stood some chance of enduring. There was no excuse at his age for marrying the wrong woman. Sixteen years older? Well, that was not too much. When she was thirty he should be only forty-six. But let there be an illusion for a while of love as he had sought for love until the war had come and driven love into the background with every other emotion except this restless urgent fret to be doing instead of thinking. He would avail himself of the expert knowledge and business acumen of Gadrilakis *père* to secure this yacht, and that would provide an excuse to call upon him at home, where he might have the luck to find Zoe.

That evening at dinner Mervyn Iredale announced that a shadow theatre had started its performances on a piece of wasteground a few minutes from their quarters and suggested they should all pay it a visit.

Kellaway at once looked grave.

"I can't come. I must go back to the Bureau and finish off a stack of work."

He was a stocky good-looking fellow, a year or two younger than John, with clear-cut features, a fresh complexion, and dark wavy hair, but administrative cares had already drawn his countenance in an expression of per-

petual anxiety. He had the look of somebody who has put a five-pound note somewhere for safety and cannot remember where.

"Naxos won't blow up like Krakatoa," said Yarrow, "if you take a night off."

But Kellaway shook his head.

"Of course, you're one of those people who enjoy being overworked," Yarrow went on, jerking his head in a series of quick nods and thrusting out his underlip in the way he had when he believed himself to be making a generalization based on the careful induction of experience.

"No, I don't," Kellaway protested. "But somebody has to do the work."

John was smiling as he always did when James Yarrow began to classify Kellaway, and Iredale whose creed by now was that everything John did was right smiled too. The fifth member of the mess—a large London stockbroker called Brackenbury, who had been sent out as accountant, cut himself a hunk of bread with that air of saying 'boys will be boys,' which a man of forty so hardly avoids in the company of people just a few years younger than himself.

"Why?" Yarrow asked.

"What a ridiculous question!" Kellaway spluttered. He never failed to rise to Yarrow's cast.

"Isn't most of the work being done a device to keep people like you busy and contented so that the war can go on for another ten years to the great profit of many other people?"

"Absurd cynicism! Absurd, absurd!" Kellaway spluttered again.

"Aren't I right, sir?" Yarrow asked, appealing to John.

He and John called each other by their Christian names in private, but Yarrow's sense of significant form made him ceremonious in company.

"Probably," John replied. "You usually are."

"Don't encourage him, sir," Kellaway protested "He simply stinks of this pretentious Bloomsbury intellectualism"

"You're both Cambridge men," said John solemnly "God forbid I should intervene in an argument between two Cambridge men Though I must admit James is remarkably worldlywise for a Cambridge man"

"Oh, he was at King's," Kellaway said. "All King's men are like that It's their affectation"

"Yes, I have always understood that the atmosphere of what I hope you will allow me to call a more humane, a more ancient, and in fact an altogether more authentic University is perceptible in the courts of King's," John acknowledged.

"Well, that's not germane to the argument," Yarrow said. "I have laid down first a general proposition that large numbers of men and women all over the world are doing a great deal of unnecessary work at present and a particular proposition that Charles Kellaway is wasting his energy under the impression that he is helping to win the war. Look here, Kellaway, why did you join up? Was it to work for work's sake?"

"I joined up because I felt it was my duty," Kellaway declared.

"His country needed him," Yarrow observed, nodding sardonically. "By the way, Kellaway, do you like the mutton to-night?"

"It's very good, but what's that got to do with the argument?"

"You're sure you like it?"

"Yes, I tell you it's very good"

"Will you have another helping?"

"Certainly"

Yarrow who presided over the mess carved another helping of the mutton, and passed it to Kellaway.

"You're absolutely sure you like it?" he pressed.

"I tell you it's excellent "

"I thought you didn't like garlic?"

"I don't I hate it Loathsome stuff! Horrible stuff! Beastly stuff!" Kellaway asseverated

"Then it's a most extraordinary thing you should like this mutton," Yarrow murmured "Because it has been soundly rubbed with garlic "

Kellaway bent over his plate and sniffed

"Oh, my god!" he exclaimed "Take it away It reeks of it Oh, my god!"

With an expression of intense disgust he pushed his plate from him

Brackenbury who had just accepted a third helping sniffed at his, and followed suit As did Iredale for whose conventionality, in spite of the fact that John was apparently undisturbed by Yarrow's obscene revelation, the thought of enjoying a dish flavoured with garlic was too much of a strain

"There you are!" Yarrow jeered triumphantly. "Hysteria! Pure hysteria! And I claim your belief that you joined up for this war out of an abstract notion of duty is a similar piece of hysteria "

"Ha-ha," Kellaway laughed, with an attempt at a bitterness of sarcasm his kindly and anxiously useful character found difficult to sustain "Ha-ha! That's good! Garlic and patriotism on the same level "

"Did you say patriotism?" Yarrow asked "Are you suggesting now that you joined the war out of patriotism? Why that's an even more preposterous piece of self-deception You don't seriously maintain that you became Lieutenant Kellaway R N.V R out of patriotism?"

"I certainly do "

"But what *is* patriotism?"

"Ridiculous question! Absolutely ridiculous! Surely I don't have to teach a King's man the meaning of simple English?"

Yarrow shook his head compassionately, and turned to the burly stockbroker

"Did you become Lieutenant Brackenbury R N.V.R. out of patriotism?"

"Yes, I think I did, Yarrow."

"Of course you also became hysterical over the garlic. And it's no use asking you, Mervyn, because you were at Sandhurst when war broke out and had no choice. Why did you join up, sir?"

"Well, I suppose the war was the biggest business that had come along in my time and I didn't want to be out of it," John replied.

"I accept that as a valid reason," said Yarrow. "And probably that was your reason, Kellaway. And if it wasn't that it was because all your friends were joining up and you didn't want to be left behind by the herd."

"Not at all. Not at all," Kellaway spluttered. "I should never have dreamt of joining up unless I had hoped in my humble way to be of some use to my country. You can jeer as much as you like, Yarrow, but you're too clever to understand simple motives."

"*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*, in fact," said Yarrow. "And if you work much harder on those island files you'll soon find just how sweet and decorous it is."

"*Dulce est desipere in loco*," Kellaway retorted. "You can go on playing the fool, but I'm going to work to-night."

"Well, if we're going to this shadow-theatre," Mervyn Iredale suggested, "we'd better hurry with the rest of the dinner. Are you coming, Brackenbury?"

"No, Miss Harford's throwing a party, and I promised to go."

"She'll hook you if you aren't careful," Yarrow warned him. "There aren't too many prosperous bachelors of forty hovering around, and I know these china blondes."

"Oh, she's a very nice little girl," Kellaway insisted.

"Fine little worker too Splendid little girl She keeps my files in grand order."

Yarrow nodded

"You haven't got to worry, Kellaway You're married. It's Brackenbury she's after"

Brackenbury guffawed hoarsely.

"I'm afraid I'm too old a bird to be caught so easily as all that "

"Extraordinary fellows, these middle-aged bachelors," Yarrow observed to John as they were walking along to the shadow-theatre after dinner, having left Kellaway to his work and Brackenbury to his party "I'm credibly informed that Brackenbury has been looking after another man's wife for the last eight years, and the poor devil really thinks he's still a bachelor. There are no limits to human self-deception No limits at all "

"I suppose not, James "

As they made their way through the crowd of children gaping round the entrance of the large wooden booth in which the shadow-play would be performed John was asking himself if there was any self-deception in the resolve to marry Zoe which had surprised him this morning No, for that had come from the depths of his being, where it had been hiding all these weeks. On the contrary it would be self-deception to pretend he did not want to marry her. The thought of Zoe glowed in him. He turned to the man who was taking the money for seats and told him to admit the children gaping round the entrance. They rushed in squealing like excited piglets which had heard the splash of food poured into the trough John and the other two walked to the grand benches in front covered with threadbare red baize and took their seats. A minute later along the same line of benches came Zoe and Philia Gadrilakis with Helena Roussos and her curly-headed brother, and just as the attendant began turning down the oil-lamps for the play to begin Zoe was

sitting beside him Basil Roussos was about to take his seat on the other side when Philia pulled him back and said he must sit between her and Helena John could have sworn that as the last oil-lamp was turned out she winked at him. The empty sheet glimmered The shadow of a Turk, fantastically tall with immense moustaches, tremendous scimitar, and huge turban entered from the shadow of his house to indulge in a doggerel soliloquy spoken by the manipulator of the puppets behind the sheet:

*We are none other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with the Sun-illuminated Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show.*

"What are you saying, please?" she asked him.

"I was saying that fate is very kind sometimes," he murmured, and finding her hand with his he held it in the darkness.

Across the luminous sheet the shadow-drama which had been flattering the national consciousness of Greece probably for over a century took its course The malignant and turbaned Turk had made his exit From a latticed balcony his beautiful daughter Fatima gazed out, watching for the arrival of her kilted young Greek lover whose gallant appearance in a fustanella roused the patriotic enthusiasm of the popular parts of the audience at the back, the shrill cries of the children showing that young Greece was as keenly aware of the hereditary foe as ever After a long love scene of elaborate pantomimic gesture the beautiful young Fatima aided by her confidante agreed to elope with the gallant young Greek, and then just as the shadows of the two lovers were stealing across the luminous sheet toward that ideal eternal happiness of stage-lovers back came the malignant and turbaned Turk. The fight between him and the young Greek roused the

audience to a state of such vociferous excitement that John was able to lean over to Zoe and whisper without fear of being overheard

"Zoe mou, se agapō I love you, my Zoe "

She looked round in an alarm that was far more convincing dramatically than the alarm of Fatima's shadow watching the shadow of her father fighting with the shadow of her lover upon that luminous sheet

"Don't be afraid, Zoe Nobody can hear," he murmured

But she had withdrawn her hand, for, damn it, she was evidently afraid her curly-headed young friend would see the way her hand was being held

The shadows of the combatants were leaping about on the luminous sheet, now swelling up to giant size, now shrinking to atomies, while to excite still further the emotions of the audience the voice of the unseen reciter accompanying himself on some kind of gong was chanting his doggerel epic behind

"Listen to me, Zoe Do you hate me to say I love you?"

"Oh, please, please," she entreated, speaking now in Greek "I am blushing, I am blushing Everybody will see how much I am blushing "

"But if nobody could see, you would not mind my holding your hand?" he pressed

"I will not answer you Please watch the play It is very exciting Look, how they are fighting "

The brave young Greek and the malignant Turk were now executing a series of leaps which carried them completely off the sheet and left Fatima gazing up at emptiness, her hands clasped in anguish for the safety of her lover Then suddenly the head of the Turk had been severed, and like a football it was being kicked round the luminous sheet by the triumphant young Greek, while the popular part of the audience shouted in exultation and

applauded his valour and skill The hereditary foe had been conquered, and not merely conquered but humiliated The two lovers were clasped in the embrace of drama that signifies happiness ever afterwards The national pride was vindicated

As they were all going out of the booth John took Philia's arm

"Will you do something for me?" he asked

"I have put Zoe next to you," she reminded him.

"I know. I'll love you as a brother to the end of your life. But to-morrow afternoon at four o'clock I'm going to call upon your father on business, and if I come half an hour earlier try to manage that I can get a few minutes alone with Zoe"

"I shall try," she promised him "Was she sweet for you in the theatre?"

"She was as sweet as she could be considering how frightened she was lest anybody should see I was holding her hand"

"Zoe is always frightened. I am not at all frightened."

The house which Nicolas Gadrilakis had taken was about a mile beyond the old Turkish Consulate It belonged to one of the civil servants who had been expelled from Lipsia in December and whose wife and family had followed him into exile The house itself was built of marble like most of the others in Lipsia, and from the rooms there was the usual exquisite marine view. It was not a pretentious building, and the two stories of which it consisted, full of old-fashioned furniture, seemed extremely modest after their great new garish house above the Piræus, with its *nouveau riche* display of wealth Madame Gadrilakis, however, rather enjoyed the smaller quarters This temporary abode at Lipsia reminded her of the little house above the sea at Castella to which her husband had

taken her when they were married twenty years ago. Nicolas, from whom at forty-five the passions, except the passion for gambling, had been eliminated partly by increasing bulk, partly by the agreeable rapidity with which, especially since the outbreak of war, he had been making money, found himself somewhat embarrassed by the way in which sentiment evoked by the resemblance between this Lipsia house and their first home together had reawakened in his wife an inclination to make conjugal demands upon him to which he found response difficult. At first this had roused the jealousy of Madame Gadrilakis, and she had bribed the servants to spy upon her husband in the expectation of catching him out with a mistress. When her enquiries failed to convict Nicolas of any dissipation, apart from high play at the gambling-club which he and his rich fellow-refugees had made it their first job to establish in Lipsia to while away the hours of exile, she had become a woman with a grievance, never tired of inveighing against the disillusionment of matrimony and the burden men became when old age was on their heels.

Besides the resentment over her husband's lack of ardour, Madame Gadrilakis was aggrieved by his failure to gratify her social ambitions. At the Piræus she had taken for granted the society of which their money made them free. It was a society of well-to-do mercantile folk from the ambient of which she never dreamed of aspiring to pierce the exclusiveness of the best Athenian society. To her Athens was chiefly a place to which she drove in her car for the purpose of shopping. In Lipsia, however, she had had forced upon her notice the existence of a small and extremely self-satisfied little island society for which she was apparently not considered good enough. This society by what she could discover about it had been built up on the mercantile prosperity of Lipsia, and was, moreover, in its origins a refugee society founded upon the

island by some of those who had escaped from the great massacre of Chios about a hundred years ago. What right had such people to turn a cold shoulder on more recent refugees who were just as rich as they were? Probably she would not have been so indignantly aware of this proud island society if soon after their arrival she had not overheard her daughters discussing, with what she considered a most humiliating lack of appreciation of their own position in the world, the surprise of finding themselves at a party with the Ladas girls. This had been the Christmas dance the officers of the *Snopdragon* gave.

"No doubt they will expect me to call upon them presently," she had said with condescension. "When the weather gets better I must make the effort. And though we cannot entertain them as we could entertain them at home I dare say they will be very well pleased to meet people who live in the city. To live always on this island must be very dull for them."

Philia, whose only accomplishment acquired at that very expensive school to which she had been sent seemed the ability to be impudent to her parents, Philia, little chit, had exclaimed

"Oh but, mamma, they're much too grand to call upon you."

And when she had complained to Nicolas about Philia's impudence he had laughed with that stupid laugh he seemed to think was all that a wife of twenty years was now entitled to, and had actually agreed with Philia!

"I meet Theodore Ladas at the club sometimes and always find him courteous and agreeable, but you'd better give up the idea of forcing your way into island society. They are most exclusive here, and indeed I do not blame them. After all, they know nothing about us, and we are here just for a while until things are settled on the mainland."

"So your wife is not good enough? Is that what you are telling me?"

"Not at all, *poullaki mou* I am telling you it is not reasonable to expect people to throw open their doors to strangers "

"You have no pride, Nicolas And do not call me your little chicken when you know perfectly well that I am no longer your little chicken "

And again that stupid laugh as if he were humouring a child or an imbecile

The only salve Madame Gadrilakis could apply to her wounded vanity was to forbid Zoe and Philia to attend any more dances in the *Snapdragon* where they had to meet young women who considered themselves too proud to be called upon by their mother. However, as the *Snapdragon* left Lipsia a few days after that dance and the captain of the *Catapult* had as yet shown no signs of desiring to entertain the youth and beauty of Lipsia, resident and refugee, the ban was too theoretical to be severely felt

In any case there was plenty of companionship for Zoe and Philia among the refugees from the mainland, and plenty of amusement at parties given by them and by the less aristocratic elements of Lipsia society like the Greek and English employees of the Eastern Telegraph Company, in which intercourse they had the support of Helena Roussos and the escort of her brother Basil.

Helena Roussos had been in school in Athens with the Gadrilakis girls, and her brother had been at the University when war came Their father who owned a factory of some kind in Eastern Thrace had decided to stay in Turkey and look after his business, but it had been thought unwise to interrupt the education of his son and daughter, and they had stayed on in Athens until with the development of the war communication with home became too hazardous to be attempted Nicolas Gadrilakis, who was an old friend and business associate of the elder Roussos,

had made himself responsible for looking after the finances of the young people while communication with Turkey was interrupted, and when the Liberal *débâcle* occurred it had been the natural thing for Helena and Basil to accompany him into temporary exile, particularly as Basil had made himself prominent as a leader of Liberal demonstrations by the University students. They did not live with the Gadrilakis family in Lipsia, but had rooms down near the harbour, where Basil who had scholarly ambitions worked as hard at his books as what by now had become his utter obsession by Zoe allowed him.

It was fully recognized by Zoe's parents that Basil Roussos was in love with her, and if Zoe had been willing to be betrothed to him her father would certainly have agreed to the match, and that in spite of having heard that unlike himself his old friend Athanasius Roussos looked in a fair way to be ruined by the war, having been unable to rebuild his factory, which had been destroyed by the Bulgarians in the Balkan war, before the coming of the Great War. On the other hand Madame Gadrilakis did not consider Basil at all the kind of match for a girl whose father could easily spare a dowry of half a million drachmas should a wealthy suitor present himself, and she warmly encouraged Zoe's refusal to commit herself to a betrothal. At the same time she was too deeply preoccupied with her own amorous grievances and too persistently indulging the intensified egocentricity which so often accompanies the menopause to bother herself about the frustrated passion of Basil Roussos for her elder daughter. Her own frustrated passion seemed to her the hub of the universe.

Zoe herself discouraged Basil, but like most girls she found it difficult to resist taking advantage of the proprietary rights conferred by having a young man madly in love with her, of whom she herself was fond as a companion but with whom she was not the least in love. Besides, with her soft heart it was difficult not to gratify

poor Basil by letting him be her slave. If a cynic had observed that a willing slave was a great convenience, she would have been genuinely hurt by his failure to appreciate that she allowed Basil Roussos to be for ever at her beck and call only because he would have been utterly wretched if she did not make use of him. She would often confide in Philia how terrible it was to have somebody so jealous for ever in one's company, somebody who did not hesitate even to threaten suicide when he felt himself the least bit slighted, and Philia would reply that she would commit suicide herself rather than be bored by the passion of a young man whose passion she did not return, and that if she were Zoe she would not allow Vasili to mention love.

On the afternoon before they went to the shadow-show Zoe had complained to her younger sister about Vasili's pertinacity.

"Well, you shouldn't let him kiss you ever," Philia had told her.

"But what else can I do, Philia? He is so unhappy if I always say 'no'."

"I wouldn't let him kiss me."

"But he doesn't want to kiss you."

"I wouldn't let him if he did want to."

Zoe had striven to rouse sympathy for the tormented Vasili.

"He was so pale this morning, and when I asked him why he was so pale he told me it was because he had dreamt about me last night."

"Then he was very lucky. If he can have you in dreams, he should not be lovesick in the morning. I'm sure poor pappa would be very glad if he could dream about mamma instead of always being worried by her. Yesterday afternoon when he was lying down I passed their room and I heard her asking him to make love with her and when he didn't want to she threw her brush at him."

"Philia, you are wicked."

"No, I am not at all wicked, but I see quite clearly that happiness on earth depends on making love with the right person, and I am never going to make love with a man who does not want me or with a man I do not want"

"But I am not making love with Vasili," Zoe had protested

"No, but you are so weak with him. He believes now that if he worries you long enough you will give way and marry him."

"I *am* very fond of him. We have been friends now more than three years. He loved me first when I was only as old as you are now"

"Yet you are still irritated when he wants to kiss you. What nonsense you talk!"

"But he is like a brother. If we had a brother we should not want to be always kissing him," Zoe had argued.

"A brother would not always want to be kissing us. It is no good for you to be making bad excuses to me," Philia had said firmly. "You do not want to let Vasili go. You have had his adoration for three years and you will be lost without it unless you find somebody else. Why don't you fall in love with that English officer?"

"Which English officer?"

"Ah, now, please don't pretend to me, Zoe, because I know you too well. You like him quite a lot, and he is in love with you"

"Because he danced with me three times? What a stupid remark! Didn't he dance with you?"

"Yes, but he wanted to talk about you all the time. I think if he had been a little interested in me I would have a good flirt with him. Not too serious, because I shall not be married yet awhile. But still I would flirt quite a lot with him"

"Yes, you can flirt because you are only a child," her elder sister of eighteen had told her. "But love is too serious a thing for flirting. Look at poor Vasili. He was

sick all that night because I danced three times with that Englishman. It was Helena who told me."

Philia gave a contemptuous ejaculation

"Of course she must fight a battle for her brother. If he could marry you it would mean a good match. But she flirted herself quick enough with the captain of the *Snapdragon*, and *he* was married. Helena pretends to be so demure and is always so shocked when I say something she pretends *she* doesn't understand, but I saw her kissing the captain not a bit in a flirt way as I kiss."

On the night after the shadow-show Philia tackled her elder sister when at last Basil Roussos had torn himself away from Zoe's company.

"Oh, he is so jealous and impossible!" Zoe exclaimed, brushing fiercely at the coppery tresses hanging down over her shoulders in long glinting curls. "Because I have sat besides that English officer he has made a terrible quarrel downstairs."

"He would have made a much more terrible quarrel if he could have seen the way the Englishman held your hand all the time. But I pushed myself forward so that he could not see, and when he spoke to me to make me move I still pushed myself forward when I talked to him, and his face was yellow with rage. If he was a lion I think he would have eaten me. Your hair is lovely, Zoe. I think the Englishman would be very glad to see you now."

"He took my hand," Zoe declared, swinging round from the mirror in a bonfire of blushes. "If I tried hard to take it away everybody would have seen that he was holding my hand. It was better to leave my hand alone and look as angry as I felt."

"Angry?" her sister mocked. "Angry? I never saw you look less angry in your life. And your face now is in such a flame that a donkey would know you had fallen in love. Vasilis was right to be jealous. He *can* be jealous, I think."

"But he is so old He must be more than thirty"

"He is thirty-four, because I asked him," said Philia

"You have such impudence," her sister declared
"And isn't thirty-four even worse?"

"It is certainly very old," Philia agreed "But I find something very attractive in a man who is quite old I find young men so selfish, so interested in themselves and what they want and what they expect to do I like a man to be interested in me"

"You talk as if you were a cocotte," said Zoe severely.
"What you like about men and what you don't like! As if you knew anything about it at your age"

"I should know how to get rid of Vasili in less than two hours of such jealous grumbling," Philia retorted "But let us talk seriously, my beloved sister Are you or are you not inclined to be in love with this Englishman?"

"I don't know him"

"But would you like to know him?"

"How can I know him without a scandal?"

"Why must there be a scandal? He is not married. He is not poor He writes plays He would make a good husband for you"

"Englishmen are not like Greeks, you silly little girl. They do not marry a girl because it is a suitable match. They must love. If you had read Byron, you would know how much an Englishman thinks of love. We are always told that Englishmen have no passion But I do not believe that"

"Nor do I," Philia agreed "And your Englishman is passionately in love with you"

Zoe had been brushing her hair more and more gently as the conversation began to turn on the Englishman. Now she turned again, and her blue eyes, which were darker round the edge of the iris so that they seemed burning from within, gazed deep into the candid brown eyes of Philia.

"Do you really think he is in love with me?"

"Don't you think so yourself?"

"I think he would like to flirt with me "

"Well, that would be more amusing than being at the mercy of Vasili's lovesick selfishness. But I think it would be much more than a flirt with him "

Philia could see her sister's breast rising and falling to the beat of a quickened heart.

"You know such a lot about him. How do you know all this?" Zoe asked

"I have asked him myself. He was so sweet to me when we were dancing. I was really quite vexed that it was entirely on your account, but being as you know the most unselfish and devoted of sisters I put my own pride on one side and listened to him talking about you. To-morrow he is coming to our house "

"What do you say?" Zoe exclaimed in alarm

"Don't look so frightened. He is not coming to ask for your hand. He wants to see father on business. He has an appointment at four o'clock "

"What is that to me then?" Zoe asked.

Philia laughed.

"You are quite disappointed, eh? Never mind, here is some good news for you. He will come at half-past three, and he is hoping you will find yourself dressed by then. He is a little wise, this Englishman. He feels sure if he comes half an hour early pappa will perhaps be lying down and mamma too and perhaps he will see his *psyche* "

"He will not see me," Zoe declared firmly

"Ah, so you know who his *psyche* is? But please do not give yourself the trouble to look demure like Helena, because although I am three years younger than you I already know you well enough to understand all your little pretences. Well, I have told you his message. He has held your hand all the evening. You must have found

out by now whether that displeased you so much. If it did not displease you so much, you will be dressed by half-past three and let him find you in the *sala*, looking, oh so very very innocent "

"He will not see me," Zoe again declared, but less positively

"Well, I cannot argue about the future," her sister said, "because thanks to your quarrel with Vasili I have stayed awake much longer than I meant merely to help you. Only one word more "

"What's that?"

"If he kisses you, you must tell me if he kisses you so sweetly, because I must admit I would rather like to have found out that for myself Good-night. May you dream of your English officer "

Philia glided from her sister's room.

Although it was but February it seemed already summer when John was shown into the *sala*, for the jalousies were closed against the sunshine and over the house brooded the silence of the siesta which marks the Mediterranean afternoon The room in spite of its old-fashioned heavily-stuffed sofas and chairs wore the slightly desolate look so many rooms reserved for ceremonious occasions wear, the look of a room which has never been called upon to respond to the warmth of human intimacy and feels ill at ease when it is not a setting for people in their best clothes chattering small talk John glanced round to discover some evidence of Zoe's presence left therein, but there was nothing. Then he noticed on a mahogany music-stand two large tropical shells He could never resist picking up such a shell and listening for a moment to the sound of the distant sea, and when he lifted one of them he saw underneath half a dozen loose snapshots. They had evidently been taken recently, for he recognized

the tweed overcoat which Zoe had been wearing when he had caught a glimpse of her during these last winter weeks. Most of the snapshots were of groups in every one of which she was standing beside Basil Roussos, but the last he picked up was of herself posed on a rock by the water's edge. He was tempted to slip it into his pocket, but decided to ask her for it. A minute or two later Zoe and Philia came into the room, and a moment later Philia had slipped away. He and Zoe were alone together for the first time.

"Don't be so shy with me, Zoe."

He took her hand and drew her towards him.

"I loved you from the first moment I saw you. Will you ever love me?"

She suddenly looked up at him, with eyes that burned and yet reproved.

"But, sir, I do not know you."

"If people fall in love they have no need to know one another beforehand. And if I call you *psyche mou* in Greek, must you reply by calling me 'sir' in English?"

"But what must I call you, sir? I think 'sir' is polite English. It is how I was learning in the school."

"Oh, it's extremely polite, but just a little too polite, *kyria*."

"Ah, now I think you will laugh to me. I am a too small girl for call *kyria*. I am Zoe."

"And I am John."

"But what can people think if I am saying 'John'?"

"They can think we are going to be married," he suggested, "and they might be thinking the truth." And then in Greek he talked about marriage until her laughter began to ripple irrepressibly.

"Oh, please," she begged, in an abrupt recognition of her bad manners. "I am so rude to laugh, and you are speaking Greek very very well, but I am laughing because your Greek is so grand and serious."

He caught her to him in a kiss.

"But that is not at all good," she whispered.

"Well, no distinction is made between the written kiss and the spoken kiss. And I had to be sure I was making my meaning perfectly clear. Zoe, will you marry me?"

"But why are you so quick to ask me that?"

"Because I have an appointment with your father at four o'clock, and if I am to tell him I want to marry his daughter I must know if his daughter wants to marry me."

She clasped her hands in a gesture of alarm.

"Please, please, you must not tell him now. I must wait. He would think you are mad to see a young girl like me once or twice and ask to marry me. It is wartime, and you are here for war."

"You're not laughing at my Greek now, *Zoe mou*," he teased.

"But I am not yet *he Zoe sou*."

How exquisite it sounded even when translated! 'the Zoe of thee'!

He caught her to him once again, and this time her lips were his.

"Sweet! Too sweet," she sighed low in an ecstasy. Then she broke away from his embrace. "Oh, what am I doing? What am I saying?"

"You do love me?"

"Yes."

He moved to take her in his arms again, but she put up her hands in entreaty.

"No, no, I must sit quietly. My cheeks are red. My heart is beating so fast. My father will wonder what we have been doing."

"If I ask him for his daughter's hand, he will wonder no longer."

"But you must not ask him such a thing," she protested. "It is too soon, much too soon. Perhaps you do not know if you really want to marry me. Everything is so strange

in these days of war It can easily be that you imagine you want to marry a little Greek girl, and presently you will wake up from a dream and find it was a mistake ”

“But, Zoe, you forget I am not a boy At thirty-four a man knows his mind It would be a better argument if you warned me that you might wake up from a dream. Might you, Zoe?” he asked softly

“I do not think I shall wake up,” she answered gravely
“When you hold me I am lost to myself I seem to become only you But, please, do not speak now to my father If I say to you, ‘John, please’, then you will pay attention to what I am asking you, yes?”

“But why must we make a secret of it?” he persisted.
“I’ll be frank, *angelē mou*, and admit I did not mean to speak about marriage until we had known each other better But no knowledge can be added to what I learnt in that last kiss Here is love Let us take love without drawing back Even if we wait to be married until things are clearer out here, what stops us from being engaged?”

“It is Vasili,” she said

John’s lips tightened

“No, do not look so cross It is because now I know what love can be that I am more sorry for him,” she pleaded.

“It would be kinder in the long run to put him out of his misery at once ”

“But I am afraid of what he may do He is so excitable If he should kill himself it would spoil my happiness. Let me slowly show to him that I can never love him It will be easier now Before I was always wondering if perhaps a girl could not feel what a boy feels until after she is married Now everything is different for me ”

“So we are to play about with love for the sake of a boy without self-control?” John asked bitterly.

“But you must be sorry for him, because he can never make me feel what you can make me feel.”

"Yes, that's all very well, but so long as he does not know that he will continue to hope that he can persuade you into loving him. And it's not going to be easy for me to stand by and watch him tagging round after you because you are too soft-hearted to make him understand once and for all that you can never love him. If you were engaged to me, that would finish it."

"But I know Vasil, and I tell you he might kill himself. I used to be frightened of this even before I could understand what he was feeling for me, but now I am much more frightened because I can understand how terrible it would be to love and not to be loved. And now I am *he Zoe son* I am. I am."

And when from that third kiss her lips drew back to ask his promise to say nothing to her father he gave the promise with a kiss that caught them open as the dewy petals of a rose. Like the whispering voice of time a light breeze began to lisp through the slats of the jalousies and remind them that in the tempered sunlight of this room the world would come to life again.

"My father will be here soon. We must not kiss again."

He rose from the sofa on which they were sitting and fetched from under the shell the snapshot he had coveted.

"I may have this?"

"It is not a very good picture of me."

"It will be a reminder of to-day, but you are right, it is not a good picture of you because when that snapshot was taken we had not kissed each other."

At this moment Philia came into the room.

"Father is coming in a minute. He was furious with me because I did not tell him you were here. But I said you were quite amused with Zoe and me. Well, what have you two found out about each other?"

"We have found out we are in love," John said. "But we can't be married yet. Indeed, we can't even be en-

gaged, because your soft-hearted sister has to break the news gently to Basil Roussos "

"Just what I would think," Philia exclaimed scornfully

"Oh, you shouldn't have told Philia," Zoe said. "Nobody must know "

"I must have some person in my confidence," John insisted "And I prefer Philia to anybody else, because I know she will do all she can to stop this being kept a secret "

"No, no, you have promised me Please, please, it must be a secret until I say not," Zoe begged

"It's no use, Philia, I did promise her," John sighed "And so it will be a ship not a daughter I shall discuss with your father "

"A ship?" Zoe echoed in disquiet "And you will go in it?"

"I expect so "

At the back of his mind John was almost wishing he had used the ship as a way to persuade Zoe to give up her tenderness for the feelings of Basil Roussos Yet it was as well he had not been tempted. In the sudden lightening of the present by love he must not forget that the war was still lying like a weight upon the rest of the world, even if now that the war had given him Zoe he could not feel extremely indignant with it

"I hate ships," she declared passionately

"We met first in a ship "

"And if you go in a ship and are killed by a submarine?"

"That will be the fortune of war "

"I think war is so stupid," she said with contempt.

John remembered Euphrosyne Ladas weeping beside the orange-grove at Grazia the year before last and how often during that debasing time at Salonica he had appealed to that vision as the justification of so much he hated doing To her the failure of Greece to go to war had been a humiliation And now from this little Greek girl, whose

father had put a great deal of his money at the disposal of the party which saw in war the only hope for the future of Greece, he was hearing that war was stupid. And because he loved her such a judgment was seeming to him the height of human wisdom.

"My dear Commander Ogilvie, please excuse my very bad manners," the plump little father of that Zoe of his was saying as he bustled into the room. "I'm afraid you have been annoyed by my two daughters. Run away now, children. Commander Ogilvie and I have business to talk. Have you offered the Commander coffee? No? *O thee mou*, what daughters! Tell the girl to bring coffee quickly. They are good children," he assured John when Zoe and Philia had departed, "but," he tapped his head, "no thought! Please pardon."

Over the coffee John explained the kind of craft he was wanting.

"I think I know just the little ship you want, if we can have her, and I think we can. She is now at Hydra. A yacht which belonged to one of the Princes, but for some years has been used as a ferry-boat with the mainland. Tonnage about 120. Speed about eleven knots, perhaps twelve or even thirteen if she were driven. Draft about fourteen feet. A nice handy little ship and well fitted up. Two saloons, and about half a dozen good cabins. Do you want to buy her? They'll ask a big price, I'm afraid."

"I'd like to buy her, but I don't want to frighten them off at home. What would it cost to charter her?"

"We'll enquire. About £300 a month I should guess. Will you find the crew?"

"We'll have to have a Greek crew. We'll get men easily at Hydra, I suppose?"

"Easily. The best of seamen. And I know the right captain for you. He was one of my own men, but the ship was torpedoed last December and I haven't a command

for him at the moment A good fellow Pneumatikos by name First-rate disciplinarian and a reliable navigator "

"I want to get her armed," John said "There'd be no difficulty about the owners' agreeing to that?"

"None at all Though I'm afraid you'll have to pay a heavy premium for insurance "

"Do you think I can count on her not costing more than £700 a month all included?"

"It depends on how much coal you burn. I should think she'd burn about three tons in twenty-four hours' steaming And coal is very expensive now I'm paying up to £10 a ton Of course you *could* use lignite, but with the speed you'll lose you won't gain much by that "

"I'll be able to get a good deal of coal from Mudros "

"Then I think you can feel fairly safe in covering everything with £700 a month "

"In that case I shall be obliged if you will enter into negotiations right away, Mr Gadrilakis "

"With pleasure, and I shall have her as cheaply as possible, my friend. I have not forgotten your kindness that horrible afternoon at the Piræus "

What a pity, John thought, he could not say to Mr Gadrilakis that now the business of the yacht was settled what about marrying his elder daughter? He hoped that when the moment did come to ask such a question it would be answered with as much practical common sense as the enquiries about the yacht

"By the way, what is the name of the little ship?"

"*Argo*."

"Well, that's certainly the name of all others I would have chosen," John said with pleasure Captain Spicer's Argonauts!

The *Argo* reached Lipsia when the almond-blossom in the garden below the Consulate was fast fading The

Consulate mess had the joy of seeing her slim grey shape steaming over the blue March sea beyond the deeper rose of the peach-trees which were now in bloom

"By Jove, she looks splendid," Kellaway exclaimed "I shall enjoy getting round all the controls and seeing for myself that things really are working "

"If you take your files with you, you needn't bother about submarines," said Yarrow "You could keep afloat on them for days "

"Well, you won't get me aboard her," Brackenbury put in, cramming a huge pipe with that air of saying 'boys will be boys' "And she's going to make a formidable addition to my accounts "

"We'll take Miss Harford with us as a tame siren," John suggested "And then Brackenbury will be lured aboard "

"From figures to figure," Mervyn Iredale added, and laughed in slight embarrassment because he did not feel sure after all that it was such a very good joke when Brackenbury turned on him a cold fish-like eye

Luckily it was a bagless day at the Bureau, so that all the clerical staff were able to go on board as soon as the *Argo* was moored stern on to the quay and revel in the inspection of the new toy

"What did you say the Captain's name was, sir?" James Yarrow asked

"Pneumatikos Why?" John replied.

"Really?"

"Yes Why?"

"Have you seen him yet?"

"No, I'm just going to interview him now. What's the joke, James?"

And when John saw the Captain he found it hard not to burst out laughing, for he turned out to be one of the fattest men he had ever beheld He must have weighed all of three hundred and fifty pounds. It was lucky that

the pronunciation of modern Greek demanded that his name should be pronounced 'Pneumatikos' To address as Pneumatikos somebody who looked as if he had been blown out with a pump would have been impossible to achieve with suitable gravity

Captain Plato Pneumatikos was a taciturn man, no doubt because before he spoke he had to take a deep breath, as if like an organ he could not become vocal without a reserve of air However, he inspired confidence as a man who knew his job, and as James Yarrow pointed out he practically made the yacht unsinkable

"I say, sir, we must give a dance on board," Iredale suggested, when in addition to all the other delights of the new toy a piano was observed in the comfortable after-saloon

"We'll have to fumigate the yacht first," Yarrow said "I've just found a louse in the dining-saloon forrard"

"A louse?" Kellaway echoed "Oh, my god, how frightful!"

He took off his jacket and began to shake it

"Damn it, Charles, don't shake them all over us," John protested "We'll have to get the saloons and the cabins fumigated"

And this was the order with which the *Argo* began her career on active service

John went off to report her arrival to the S.N.O. Captain Arthur Majendie of H.M.S. *Catapult* was a handsome man whose long eyelashes had earned him the nickname of 'Gou-gou' in the Service He was a faded flag-lieutenant which is often the equivalent in the Navy of a faded chorus-beauty He was a kindly man, subject to periodic states of gloom when the promotions appeared in the Gazette and he failed to read *Commander A. L. Majendie to be Captain*, for he enjoyed only the acting-rank of captain when in command of the *Catapult* and his promotion was overdue. So long as the war lasted he would

always have a chance, but even the war might not last long enough to enable him to retire with the rank of Rear-Admiral, wherefore it was advisable to steer clear if possible from Captain Majendie until he had recovered from the disappointment of each fresh Gazette

John struck a bad patch to-day

"Come aboard, sir, to report arrival of the steam-yacht *Argo* which is to be used for Intelligence work "

Captain Majendie ran a weary hand over his handsome faded face and looked reproachfully at John from those still lustrous long-lashed eyes

"Humph," he grunted "You'll be a nice nuisance all over the Aegean "

"I hope not, sir "

"Well, don't worry me for any stores "

"No, sir. I was going to ask for permission to proceed to Mudros as soon as we've fumigated the yacht."

"Fumigated her? What for?"

"Lice, sir "

"Good lord almighty! What next?"

"Cockroaches, sir, I should imagine "

"Well, I suppose as you've got that ridiculous craft you'll have to make use of it Report when you're ready to sail Oh, and, Ogilvie," the Captain added as John was preparing to leave the cabin, "what is this fellow Yarrow?"

"He's an officer attached to the Bureau."

"I know that, but what sort of fellow is he? I mean to say I strongly suspect him of trying to be insolent to me "

"I hardly think that, sir "

"Well, I don't know, but when he met me on the quay this morning, he stopped and stared at me in a very peculiar way, and then he came up to me and peered right into my face, damn it, and then stepped back and made a kind of mock bow and I suppose what he thought was a salute, but it struck me he was trying to be insolent."

"No, sir," said John soothingly. "I know that salute. It comes from being shortsighted. He must have wanted to make sure it was you, and the bow would be intended as an apology for not recognizing you at once."

"Well, of course if you put it that way, it may be all right. But I was extremely annoyed at the time, I can tell you."

"I'm quite sure Yarrow would be most upset, sir, if he thought he had annoyed you. Shall I speak to him?"

"No, no, Ogilvie. I see now I was mistaken. Have a drink."

"Thanks very much, sir, but I must get back and chase them over this fumigation business."

"All right, all right. And any stores you want that we can let you have just let me know."

"That's awfully kind of you, sir."

And all was well again. Good fellow, Majendie. John hoped he would soon get his promotion.

"James, you are a clumsy owl," John told him later when he related the story.

Yarrow nodded his head and clicked his tongue in compassion for the folly of dignity in uniform.

"These naval fellows never grow up. Majendie's still a prefect and some fourth-form boy is breaking a side-rule by walking on a bit of gravel sacred to the Sixth. And when he retires, what will he do? Try to reduce his handicap at golf and believe that's better than wisdom."

"By the way, James, I finished the *Chartreuse de Parme* last night. You're right. It's marvellous."

"I think it's the best novel ever written except perhaps *War and Peace*," Yarrow said, after a brief but markedly judicious pause.

"Well, that's too long to read while there's a war on," John objected.

"It's not so long as this damned war," James Yarrow retorted.

"Never mind, James, you'll have learnt to play the flute before it's finished, though by the way I ought to notify you that by a unanimous vote of all officers attached to the Spicer Bureau in the Aegean you are not to practise when we are at sea in the *Argo* "

"Don't worry I've got a patent hammock which I'm going to have slung in the little deck smoke-room, and nobody will hear me practising there Besides, as a matter of fact the flute would soothe sea-sickness The ancient Greeks understood the curative value of the flute for all bodily and mental disorders "

"The ancient Greeks never heard you practising, James If Apollo flayed Marsyas, I shudder to think what he would have done to you "

"You're very blithe these days, John."

"I'm excited about the fun we're going to have in the *Argo* "

But this was only partially true as an explanation of John's high spirits It was the thought of Zoe that ran through his being like the fumes of a superlative champagne, and it was the kind of action the *Argo* promised which seemed to offer a safety-valve for the almost irrepressible elation of his mind The war which had been closing round him like the walls of a prison had given him her He felt as grateful to it as Fabrizio del Dongolo to that captivity in the Farnese Tower which gave him Clelia Conti, and like Fabrizio he would now have been as little grateful to his friends for helping him to escape

That owing to Zoe's desire for secrecy he had hardly even seen her for the past month had but enriched the treasure in his heart After all, he had nothing to fear The wise child Philia had promised him that He laughed, thinking that if Zoe had wished to fan his love for her to raging flame she might have behaved just as she was behaving; but with the assurance that the motive actuating

her was utterly remote from coquetry he could indulge to the limit in those dreams of love which are held to be youth's privilege and unattainable when youth is past

Blow on, south wind Bring moisture to the blossom and set the fruit She is mine without fears of what the future may deny Let this summer pass, and when the harvest is gathered we shall marry And for all our lives this summer of waiting shall be precious This is the love to match the time The reward for action. The oasis in the desert Fountains of Arabia, Zoe, are your lips And when I sail this legend-haunted and beloved Aegean its azure waters will ever be seeming no more than a painted symbol of my Zoe's eyes.

The *Argo's* fumigation fore and aft being accomplished, she left for Mudros three or four days later John insisted that Kellaway should travel north with himself, Yarrow, and Iredale, and when Kellaway argued that a two days' absence from the Bureau would involve his files in hopeless confusion told him Miss Harford was perfectly competent to manage the office-work while he was away and that if any major question arose it would have to be settled by himself in any case and could be telegraphed up to Mudros Kellaway was then ordered to take this brief holiday

The yacht sailed at dusk, and after they had started John announced it would be an agreeable diversion to look in at Port Hiero in Lesbos and pay a visit to their old friend Trehawke and the *Snapdragon*, who was there as S N O at the moment

"The only objection is that the entrance is very narrow, and they've got a signal station on a small islet in the middle Can anybody make signals?"

"I can," Yarrow proclaimed "I went into the whole business pretty thoroughly early on in the war, but I gave it up because I was too shortsighted to read the answer."

"I can read signals up to a point," Iredale announced

"Then between Jack Sprat and his wife we ought to manage to get in without being blown out of the water," John said

It was a calm night Kellaway, Iredale, and John were inclined to scoff at James Yarrow for securing himself against sea-sickness by sleeping in that patent hammock of his in the deck smoke-room

"You'll probably all be sorry you're not in hammocks before we get back to Lipsia," Yarrow told the others

By midnight John's state of mind fulfilled the prophecy He had taken what was called the owner's cabin, though it was a good many years since its former royal owner had slept in it It was fairly spacious, fitted up with a desk besides the usual furniture, and looked as if it had been repainted quite recently It was off the starboard gangway just forward from the main saloon in cabins off which the other two below slept

He had turned in early, for they expected to reach the entrance of Port Hiero by seven o'clock next morning, but less than half an hour after falling asleep he woke up with that acute itching round the back of the neck which signifies immediately to those who have experienced it one cause and one cause only, and that is bugs Switching on the electric light, he saw his assailants retreating to the woodwork, a multitude of every size from ruby-red babies to dark brown corpulent patriarchs and crinolined matriarchs

"I arise from dreams of thee

In the first sweet sleep of night,

When the winds are breathing low,

And the stars are shining bright," John grunted as he banged away at the obscene host with a slipper

Stamati, the bright little steward, came along presently to find out what the noise meant.

"I thought this yacht had been fumigated?" John demanded

"Yes, sare All lucies killed dead No more lucies "

"And what about the bugs?"

Stamati shook his head pessimistically

"I see Well, I wish you had warned me of what might happen You'd better make me up a bed in the saloon "

"Bugs in saloon. More bugs in saloon But you wait, Captain, I make it good for you "

Stamati went off and presently returned with a canvas camp-bed such as John had slept on at Gallipoli This he made comfortable in the middle of the saloon and invited John to get in Then he produced a large tin of Keating's powder which he sprinkled over the coverlet and finally in a circle round the bed to prevent the bugs climbing up the legs

"Weave a circle round him thrice,

And close your eyes with holy dread,

For he on honey-dew hath fed,

And drunk the milk of Paradise," John quoted, and after a few sneezes soon fell fast asleep again, his last conscious thought being a speculation how Kellaway and Iredale were being able to stay in their cabins Perhaps they did not realize what that itching at the back of the neck meant.

The onslaught of the bugs was forgotten next morning in the excitement caused by the *Argo's* approach to the narrow entrance of Port Hiero On the islet bluejackets could be seen standing round a gun, while from various posts fluttered flags of the same device

"Black D on a yellow ground," Iredale proclaimed "What's it mean, Yarrow?"

Yarrow was feverishly turning over the pages of the International Code Signal book.

"Damn your eyes, I should think," John suggested.

"They'll open fire on us in a minute," said Kellaway nervously "Hurry up, Yarrow They're all round that gun. It's nothing to laugh at "

"I've got it," Yarrow shouted "Here it is! Strange ship approaching "

"By Jove, yes," John laughed, "the strangest ship they've ever seen and the strangest officers Well, what's the answer, James?"

"I'm going to spell out the answer," he said "Keep those glasses up, Iredale, and see if it has any effect "

"I should signal 'Don't shoot the performers. They're doing their best,'" John suggested

"Oh my god, do you really think they're going to open fire on us?" Kellaway asked, dancing about on the bridge in his agitation

"If I were on that islet I certainly should," John replied.

Meanwhile, Yarrow with the air of one doing physical jerks from a book of instructions was trying to spell out with a couple of signal flags the information required about the strange ship.

"Tell 'em we're Captain Spicer's Argonauts," John urged

Yarrow whose face was already twisted by the agony of trying to remember the right movements for the various letters of the alphabet made a grimace to beg for silence.

— "Curiosity and nothing else prevented their shooting us up," John declared when the *Argo* passed down the channel between the fortified islet and the olive-covered shore And indeed the bluejackets had all stopped to stare with amazement at the strange ship "They'll be asking themselves presently whether they've allowed a German submarine disguised as a circus to enter Port Hiero "

Ahead the great landlocked stretch of water, a smooth

expanse of silver now in the eye of the morning sun, widened between sloping olive-covered hills

"Well," said John, "my nerves won't stand any more signalling from James and Mervyn. 'I'm going below to be shaved. I don't want to be sunk by gunfire with yesterday's beard upon my conscience'."

He rang for the useful agent who in private life had been a barber, and as the lather was worked up relaxed his mind under the influence of soap.

One side of his face had been smoothly shaved when Yarrow and Iredale burst into the saloon.

"As far as we can make out *Snapdragon* has signalled 'Anchor a cable and a half from *Snapdragon*'. What are we to do?"

John looked out the ports and perceived the wooded shores to starboard apparently rushing headlong at the yacht.

"Drop the anchor at once, you fatheads," he shouted.

A few minutes later the yacht's dinghy with John in the stern was alongside the ladder of the *Snapdragon* at the head of which Trehawke was standing, grinning broadly.

"That was a very accurate cable and a half, Ogilvie. How did you manage it?"

"Oh, we're pretty hot stuff at cables in the *Argo*."

"Well, come and have a spot of breakfast, or will you have a pink gin first to oil the works?"

"I think I will," said John. "By Jove," he exclaimed, when he had swallowed it, "I'm beginning to understand why gin and angostura are a necessary tonic for naval operations. I say, do you think the V A will let us have a naval rating for a signalman? Otherwise Yarrow and young Iredale will wreck my nerve."

"Don't bother so much with Buzfuz, old boy. Get round Captain Lambourne, his Chief of Staff. Buzfuz will give you all you want, but unless you can charm Lambourne you won't get it."

And when they reached Mudros, into whose wide harbour much to John's relief they were escorted by a torpedo-boat, the very one in which he had travelled over from Anzac to meet Emil just before the Suvla landing, they found what good advice Trehawke had given them. In the end Captain Lambourne, a severe-looking man with a severe-looking beard and the manner of a late Victorian headmaster, agreed to let them have a Japanese three-pounder, a Maxim, three Mark One depth-charges, half a dozen hammer-bombs, and some rockets. They already had a dozen rifles of their own. After earnest pleading from John he also agreed to let them have a young R.N.V.R. seaman as signalman. On one matter, however, he was adamant. Nothing would induce him to let the *Argo* fly the White Ensign.

"What's the matter with the Blue Ensign you have? Technically even that requires an Admiralty warrant. You've no right really to fly anything except the Red Ensign. But we won't quarrel over the Blue Ensign."

"But, sir," John asked tactfully, "what is our position if we are attacked by an enemy submarine?"

"Your position is an unpleasant one unless you can fight him off."

"Aren't we liable to be shot as pirates if we're captured?"

"You certainly are. The only thing is not to let yourselves be captured."

"And you won't reconsider your decision about the White Ensign?"

"It's no use arguing, Ogilvie," said Captain Lambourne. "I'm not going to have a ship flying the White Ensign careering round the Aegean, over the movements of which I have no control. And I take it that as this queer craft of yours is to be used on Intelligence work you won't expect to submit all your movements to Mudros in advance."

"No, sir, but with all respect may I point out that we shall always be asking Captain Majendie's permission as S N O to proceed from Lipsia?"

"It's no use, Ogilvie I've done what I can for you But you cannot fly the White Ensign If you're captured by an enemy submarine I shall be very sorry, but it will be the fortune of war if the commander of it exercises his undoubted right to have you all lined up and shot "

That evening Yarrow and John were invited by the Admiral to dine with him on board his own yacht the *Swallowtail* Being a man of immense energy he preferred the mobility of this large yacht to living in a battleship and relying on a destroyer to carry him round the area whose waves he ruled in spite of defiant splashes from the enemy submarines, which with the growing intensity of the German submarine campaign were beginning to disturb these waves and suggest they were not being ruled with as much severity as they ought to be

Sir William Cordell was the typical sea-dog, a tall burly man, florid of countenance, with a choleric blue eye and a voice equally resonant whether it expressed apoplectic rage or bubbling geniality.

"Well, Ogilvie, got all you want?" he asked when he and his Staff were gathered for dinner

John wondered if he should make another bid for the White Ensign, but decided that even if he succeeded in being allowed to fly it he should certainly make an enemy of the Chief of Staff, whereas that engagement with an enemy submarine was not a certainty

"Yes, sir, thanks very much We're to have some instruction in the use of these various explosive weapons from one of your gunners to-morrow before we go back to Lipsia."

"Well, don't hit the *Swallowtail*. Eh, what? I shall expect some good information now with all this equipment And next month you'd better get round and

establish some kind of co-ordination, what? Co-ordination, eh, among these fellows all over the place? Co-ordination, yes You know what I mean by co-ordination?

"Centralizing all information at Lipsia?"

"Under me of course "

"Yes, sir, naturally That was understood "

"We've been having trouble with that fellow Stern at Icaros Do you know anything about him?"

"I've known him for years. He's absolutely first-class "

"Well, he's been causing a lot of trouble by raiding Turkish farms on the mainland Perhaps you can keep him in order. We don't want to complain about a fellow to the Foreign Office There's some talk of illicit smuggling too He's a Jew, isn't he?"

"Yes, sir "

"Well, I hope he's not a profiteer, what? Anyhow, you can go into the whole business And then you might take a run down to Rhodes and see the Italian Military Governor He was very obliging sometime ago fitting out some of our flying fellows down there in a sea-plane carrier who had been shelled off that island off the coast, I forget its name And I asked for a decoration for him. But they didn't seem to realize who he was, eh? And they sent him a C M G , what? He liked it very much at first, and then somebody told him it was beneath his dignity And he's been rather difficult ever since But I'm getting him a K C M G , what? And if it arrives next month, you can take it down and present it You speak the lingo, don't you?"

John was delighted to hear of an excuse for visiting Rhodes, where there was a Spicer Bureau run by a Biddulph which still clung obstinately to the belief that it could communicate only with Cyprus, and required admonition

At dinner the Admiral asked John abruptly if he had ever played Hunt the Slipper.

"I haven't played it for some time, sir "

"Well, you ought to introduce it at Lipsia I'm telling Ogilvie he ought to introduce Hunt the Slipper on his island, Bascombe," he barked along the table to his Flag-Commander "Finest game in the world if you have plenty of jolly gals You know the game, of course? Everybody sits round on the floor in a circle, and "

At this moment the exposition was interrupted by the entrance of a Yeoman of Signals with a message just received

Sir William put on his glasses

"Hullo, they've got the *Baluchistan*," he called across to his Chief of Staff

"Then that's two million pounds gone," said Captain Lambourne

The Admiral put his initials at the bottom of the message to show that his mind had registered the fact of the *Baluchistan's* having been sunk by submarine, and returned to Hunt the Slipper

"Well, as I was telling you, Ogilvie, all these jolly gals sit round on the floor, and it's really splendid fun Once when the Fleet was in Torbay we had the finest game of Hunt the Slipper . . do you remember that game at Torquay, Bascombe, just before the war? I was telling Ogilvie about it I know I had the slipper myself once, and by George you should have heard the way those gals giggled and screamed, what? I don't know whether . . "

Again Sir William was interrupted by the entrance of the Yeoman of Signals with a message

"The *Barbara Allen* gone now," he growled gloomily

"Then they won't get those railway-lines they were expecting at Salonica," Captain Lambourne observed

The message was duly signed, and the Admiral came back to the piping times of peace

"What was I saying when that confounded fellow came in with that signal?"

"You were telling us about the girls at Torquay, sir "

"Oh yes, they were an exceptionally pretty lot of gals. And a very jolly lot of gals And no nonsense about them, you know what I mean? Occasionally one of 'em would tip over backwards and show a bit of stocking, what? But they enjoyed it. And I was after that slipper like a dog after a rat, eh? You remember the way I was after that slipper, Bascombe?"

"Rather, sir!"

"Yes, Bascombe was my Flag-Lieutenant then, and he rather fancied himself among the gals, what? But I think I carried off the honours. There was one little gal, a little fair gal with a lovely complexion You know, sort of roses and all that sort of thing, and "

Again the Yeoman of Signals entered with his small block.

"Is this to say that another ship's been sunk?" Sir William demanded indignantly.

"Yes, sir."

"Then take the damned message away, and don't bring any more messages in until I've finished dinner How the devil can I eat my dinner if you come in every other minute to say another damned ship has been sunk?"

The Yeoman of Signals clicked his heels and retired cap in hand, the faintest flicker of a smile trembling upon his grave dutiful lips

"These damned submarines are going to make things pretty serious out here," the Admiral declared to his Chief of Staff "But I think they might let us get away from the war while we're at dinner. Yes, an awfully pretty little fair gal Do you remember the name of that pretty little fair gal, Bascombe? The one who tucked her petticoats under her knees and let me roll her right over backwards to see if the slipper was underneath?"

"Ethel something-or-other, sir "

"That's right," Sir William bellowed gleefully "Ethel Ethel Ethel well, never mind the rest of her name We all called her Ethel We were all very jolly, that evening Yes, that was Torquay in '13 It's a grand game You try it in Lipsia, Ogilvie I noticed a deuce of a lot of pretty gals there when I came to see you last December "

"Would Majendie approve of Hunt the Slipper, sir?" the Flag-Commander asked, with a twinkle

"Oh, I'll bet he's played it in his day You ask him, Ogilvie, when you get back "

John made up his mind that if he ever did ask Captain Majendie such a question he would be careful to choose a day when no papers had arrived without the news of his promotion

So passed dinner that night in the *Swallowtail*, the effect of which was to confirm James Yarrow in his opinion that naval officers never grew up

Next morning the *Argo*, now armed with a three-pounder at the stern and a Maxim in the bows, proceeded to a safe distance from the coast of Lemnos for her officers to be instructed by Mr Quirke in the rudiments of gunnery

"Now the first thing you want to remember when you fire that little joker is to put your pipes in your pockets Then get your shoulder well up to the guard before you pull the trigger or the recoil will knock you overboard Get a good range Suppose you sight an enemy at eight hundred yards? That floating box will do Now then, watch me "

The little gun roared, just as Kellaway, pipe in mouth, strolled up

"My god, I've lost two teeth from my plate!"

He stooped down and picked them up from the deck.

"What an extraordinary thing!" he gasped

"Not at all extra-ordinary," said the Gunner. "Didn't

you hear me particularly warn you to put all your pipes in your pockets when this little joker was fired?"

"I didn't hear that, Mr Quirke," Kellaway explained.

"Well, I'm very sorry about your two teeth, sir But there you are, that's what you might call an example "

After the working of the gun had been demonstrated Mr Quirke came to the depth-charges

"Yes," he said meditatively, examining what looked like a black petrol-tin with a canvas top "Yes, this is what we call a Mark One depth-charge The only time I ever saw one used was when the destroyer *Ichneumon* steaming at twenty-eight knots dropped one over a Fritz Yes, the explosion lifted her stern ten feet out of the water and she was six weeks undergoing repairs Yes, how many knots can this yacht do? About twelve, eh? Yes, well, of course it's none of my business, but I think you'd be safer with a submarine "

"Iredale," said John, "take these depth-charges, lock them up in the deck smoke-room, and bring me the key "

"Well, sir, I think that's the best place you could put them," said Mr Quirke "And now these hammer-bombs There's about thirty pounds of T N T in each of them. Just try how far you can fling the dummy Yes," he said meditatively when the dummy had been tried "Yes, I haven't ever actually seen one of these hammer-bombs used, but there was a Lieutenant R N V R the same as that officer who lost his teeth and a bit like him in face and figure and he tried to heave one of those hammer-bombs at a Fritz from a motor-launch—well, he thought it was a Fritz, but in point of fact it was a carcase of frozen beef, and he and the M L were both very badly damaged "

"Iredale," said John, "take these hammer-bombs and lock them up in the smoke-toom with the depth-charges, and don't forget to bring me back the key "

"Yes, sir, that's very wise too "

"And these rockets, Mr Quirke, are they equally dangerous?" John asked

"No, sir, they're really harmless. You just want to note the colours—two reds, is it, attacked by enemy submarine, two greens attacked by enemy aircraft, well, you'll want to check up on that. I disremember how they run. But of course you'll make sure they go up in the air? You wouldn't like it if one of these started chasing you round the deck?"

"Well, thanks very much, Mr Quirke, I think we shall sleep peacefully as long as one of us has the keys of the smoke-room. By the way, will the gun be much use against a submarine?"

"About as much use as a peashooter," said the Gunner. "The best thing you can do if a Fritz pops up in your neighbourhood is to try to ram him. And in point of fact it's the only thing you can do."

A week or two later the peach-blossom in the garden opposite the old Turkish Consulate was fading like the almond before it, but now a solitary Judas-tree burned with an intensity of fierce carmine that defied the deepening azure of the April sea. The *Argo* was making a tour of the Cyclades on which John had despatched Kellaway to overlook the port control in the various islands, and as Kellaway was much worried by the notion of being away from the centre of things John had remained in Lipsia himself to assuage his anxiety. Not that the failure to seize an opportunity to visit islands whose legends had first wakened his boyhood's imagination was much of a deprivation with the presence of Zoe on Lipsia. To behold the Naxian strand where Ariadne wept forsaken would have afforded a minor emotion compared with turning round some corner in Lipsia and meeting his blushful Zoe unexpectedly. Moreover, thanks to a confidante upon

whose good offices he had never reckoned he was enjoying fairly frequent stolen meetings with Zoe, meetings magical as this Aegean April weather when Spring was falling asleep in the arms of Summer

Mrs Strouzas was the daughter of a former superintendent of the Eastern Telegraph Company's station at Lipsia and the widow of a local merchant whom she married when she was thirty after being jilted five years earlier by a handsome young Biddulph, one of whose sons was the Francis Biddulph working for Captain Spicer in the Dodecanese. She was now a shapeless old woman of nearly seventy with an amiable putty-coloured face and a blonde wig, often dusty enough to suggest that her hair was at last turning grey. Mrs Strouzas kept this blonde wig not from the vanity which refuses to surrender to age but because her patriotism would not allow her to surrender the distinction her fairness had once lent her in a foreign society where brunettes so heavily predominated. When Miss Isabel Nixon had married Mr Strouzas she had felt in her heart that she had lowered not merely the consular dignity of her father but even the prestige of Great Britain in the Levant. However, apart from insisting on always being called Mrs Strouzas and never Madame or Kyria Strouzas and always alluding to her husband as Mr Strouzas, she had tried to avoid reproaching him with being a Greek instead of an Englishman, and she had made him a good wife during the ten years of their married life. Mr Strouzas had now been dead twenty-seven years, but in spite of her passionate love for England she had found it a less attractive place of residence for a widow of forty than the Greek island in which she had lived since she was a girl in her 'teens. So after a depressing year spent in a series of boarding-houses she had returned to Lipsia in 1892 and remained there ever since, bringing back with her a reinvigorated belief that the English were the Chosen People and that the Pope of

Rome was Antichrist. To both of these beliefs she still clung, though her theology had of late years been somewhat modified by a study of the works of Madame Blavatsky and the serious investigation of spiritualism by means of table-turning, rappings, and the planchette

Mrs Strouzas was comfortably off and she revelled in the thought that her house was a small piece of England embedded in Lipsia, and indeed what between the mid-Victorian furniture her father the consul had left behind him when he died and the late-Victorian furniture she herself bought at Maple's and Shoolbred's during that first year of her widowhood she had some justification for revelling. Not having been granted children of her own, Mrs Strouzas had for years sought a vicarious maternity in looking after the entertainment of the English employees of the E T C and of any stray Englishman who found his way to Lipsia. The war offered to Mrs Strouzas the richest opportunity of her life to indulge her three passions for patriotism, mothering Englishmen, and communicating with the spirits of the departed.

The arrival in Lipsia of the British Control Bureau and the permanent presence of a British warship in the harbour filled the cup of Mrs Strouzas' enjoyment of the war full to brimming. She was Cybele, the Great Mother. She was many-breasted Diana of the Ephesians. For John, whom she learnt from gossip to revere as the person primarily responsible for this English invasion of Lipsia, she had a warmth of admiration which he had found rather tiresome, until one day learning from Philia that she and Zoe were in the habit of going to tea from time to time with the old lady he conspired with her to go to tea the same afternoon as they did.

Now Mrs Strouzas had sharp eyes, and it did not take her long to notice that John and Zoe were by no means the bare acquaintances they had pretended to be when he first entered her drawing-room.

"Zoe, dear," she said after tea, "will you take Commander Ogilvie out and show him the garden? I'm sure dear little Philia won't mind keeping me company for a while"

Dear little Philia gave John a prodigious wink behind the undulating back of Mrs Strouzas, and then settled herself demurely on a stool at the old lady's knee to look under her guidance at an album of views of English watering-places in 1891

Zoe was inclined to blush and linger, but John took her arm and drew her toward the open french-windows and out on the terrace whence a flight of marble steps led down through a door to a small grey-walled garden by the edge of the sea

When she was younger Mrs Strouzas had tried to make this an English garden, sowing Sutton's seeds and dibbling in Barr's bulbs and planting Paul's roses with industry and optimism, but as she grew older the struggle to make English plants flourish in an unsuitable climate became too much for her, and for many years now this grey-walled garden had been a wilderness, with nothing left except roses and lilac to rise from the asphodels which had taken possession of the ground To-day the roses were not yet red, but the lilac-bushes were in their prime

"But not so sweet as you, *Zoe mou*," he murmured, crushing her to his heart between the lilacs and the sea

"Oh, please be careful," she cried "Somebody will surely see us"

"Nobody can see us except the dolphins and the Oceanides"

And indeed he was right, for the high grey walls covered with a tangle of creepers enclosed them on three sides, and on the fourth below a parapet was the sea.

She yielded then to his embrace, and in this perfumed

air they sat upon a marble seat, entranced, the multitudinous hum of bees around mingling with the sigh of the Aegean as the scent of lilac mingled with the tang of the light Aegean breeze

"At last we have found a place where we can safely meet until you have made up your little mind to face the inevitable and let the world know that we are not interested in anybody except ourselves "

"But we cannot come here so often," she protested. "What will Madame Strouzas think?"

"The old lady will think that I love you and that you love me Indeed, I'm pretty sure she thinks so already "

"But that is terrible "

"Not in the least terrible Are you still such a baby that you haven't yet discovered what a delight it is to an old lady to feel she is making a match?"

"But she will talk She talks so much "

"I'm sure she's talking now to Philia, and I'm sure that the more discreet Philia is the more convinced she will be that there is something between us Now listen, *psyche mou* Let me take Mrs Strouzas into our confidence . . "

"Oh, no, no."

"Oh, yes, yes It's too nerve-racking never to see you alone, and if you don't agree to let me confide in Mrs Strouzas I shall really go to your father and tell him I want to marry you And would you say no?"

"You are being very unkind "

"On the contrary I'm being very kind All this secrecy is being maintained solely on account of Basil Roussos, to whom just because he is in love with you I cannot bring myself to be unkind. And don't forget, *phōs mou*, don't forget, my light, that you have promised me to start curing that young man of being in love with you It is April already In June our engagement must be announced And you do love me?"

She lay back in his arms, the crimson faded from her

cheeks which now were white as the white lilac drooping above them

And thus it was that for stolen hours they met thenceforth in that grey-walled garden, for John had judged their hostess rightly. She wished perhaps that Zoe was an English girl, but then if she had been an English girl she would most improbably have brought her husband a dowry of £20,000

"I shall do everything I can to help you two dear people," she assured John and Zoe, her pale eyes dilating and contracting in the moisture of sentimental tears like two small medusæ

When John reached the Bureau soon after five o'clock he dismissed the rest of the staff and worked by himself for a couple of hours, after which he wrote a letter to Miriam Stern:

BRITISH CONTROL BUREAU,
LIPSIA

April 7th, 17.

My dearest Miriam,

I have met her at last. Once long ago I wrote to tell you I had fallen in love with a girl at first sight. I was then eighteen. I am now thirty-four, nearly twice as old, and yet I have fallen in love like a boy. She is a Greek, Zoe Gadrilakis, the daughter of a rich shipowner, and she is the same age as I was when I wrote to you about Rose Medlicott. I suppose I ought to try to describe her, but I can do no more than tell you she is small and has dark auburn hair, smouldering blue eyes, and a lily-rosed complexion, and that is to tell you nothing.

The business is a secret at present because a young man whom she has known since she was at school with his sister is madly in love with her, and she fears for what he may do to himself when he finds he has no chance to win her. She has a sensible and delightful younger sister of fifteen who agrees with me that all this is just spoiling

of a neurotic young man, but yet I cannot help being sorry for the youth, and have given Zoe till June to make it clear to him that she is not for him. I plan, war or no war, to marry her in September, provided I can satisfy her father that I am not a penniless adventurer, for she will have a handsome dowry, and if the war continues to enrich shipowners at the present rate she is likely to be a real heiress. It's odd that Julius and I should both finally have chosen two very small creatures and both of them rich! If I go on writing like this about money you'll be accusing me of an ulterior motive.

I met her first at a moment when there was everything that could keep a man from falling in love with Aphrodite herself. I had had four nights without sleep, expecting all the while that a mob was going to break in and kill not only myself but about a hundred panic-stricken refugees. I had eaten nothing except some slices of bread and a few olives. My mind was concentrated on a dangerous night voyage with the possibility of further trouble at the end of it. She came alongside the ship in a motor-boat at dusk, and I loved her at once. Analysis is beside the mark. It happened. Gabrielle has been the only serious love-affair since I left Oxford, but fond as I was of Gabrielle, falling in love with her was a kind of Narcissism, for she was the first embodiment of one of my own creations.

You may remember my telling you about another girl on this island whom I met in the autumn of '15. Logically Euphrosyne Ladas was the girl I ought to have fallen in love with. I thought so at the time, and I never could quite understand why I didn't. When I failed to do so I began to think that I never should fall in love again with that authentic immediacy, which whatever anybody may say is the only way to fall in love.

And then Zoe! She's not clever. The brains have gone to her young sister. I suppose she's not well-bred.

The Four Winds of Love

*But that only worries other people of the same nationality. It wouldn't worry me anyway, for the older I get the more convinced I am that men with brains are happier with wives who express most perfectly for them essential womanhood, irrespective of all subsidiary attractions except the appeal as essential woman. This becomes cold-blooded. I sound as if I were trying to discover reasons for falling wildly in love like this with a girl sixteen years younger than myself. There are no reasons, my dear. It is just love. You may think it's merely a passionate infatuation which is likely to die down when once it has been indulged to the top of its bent. But I'm not prone to these passionate infatuations, and pace your friend Freud and the rest of them I do still believe in love. Have you read the *Chartreuse de Parme*? Find in Fabrizio's passion for the daughter of his gaoler a parallel love with mine.*

I'm not likely to be home before I'm married, even were the war by a miracle to stop this year, and I've no desire to come back to England until it is over. I'm so happy at present that I don't really know whether I want the war to stop. This is an enchanting place, and with a yacht of my own now in which to roam this exquisite Aegean I should be happy here even if I were not wildly in love.

I ought to be seeing Emil in a week or two. We are making a cruise round the Asiatic islands. He has been having trouble with certain authorities, but I expect to be able to put everything straight. I shan't get much sympathy from him over Zoe, but Julius will appreciate my happiness, for he is happy. And you will be full of belief in the future for me, won't you? Dearest Miriam, I am so happy that I begin to ask if the gods will be jealous. This is a dangerous land for lovers. But I comfort myself with the thought that an obstacle or two has to be overcome, that I am still tied to a uniform, that,

in spite of my happiness and in spite of stolen hours in a grey-walled garden of lilacs and roses beside this legend-haunted sea, I am actually working terrifically hard, and that the Aegean still has sea-monsters to overcome in the shape of submarines

Much love,
Always your devoted
John

The insignia of the K C M G for General Paparazzo, the Military Governor of Rhodes, arrived from Mudros after Easter, and on a velvety morning the *Argo* waited for the signal from the *Catapult* that she could leave the harbour

John grew impatient

"Make a signal to *Catapult*, and ask if we can get out," he said to Bowes, the young R N V R. signalman they had been granted at the same time as the explosives

Bowes touched his cap, a puzzled expression on his good-looking schoolboy's countenance

"Beg pardon, sir?"

"Ask if we can get out," John repeated

The lines of perplexity slowly, very slowly smoothed themselves out

"You wish me to make a signal to the *Catapult*, sir, asking for permission to proceed?" he suggested with a slightly anxious hesitation

"Yes, yes, I want to sail at once "

"Ay, ay, sir," Bowes replied briskly, and like the arms of an automaton his arms responded to the conventional phrase. The flags wagged. From the *Catapult* flags waved in answer

"Permission to proceed received from the S N O , sir," he announced.

"It's getting serious, James," John told Yarrow as

they went down to the saloon for lunch "Did you notice the way that lad's brain refused to answer to the simple expression 'get out'? He had to translate it into jargonese before his flags would wave correctly We're beginning to think in phrases instead of words. If a feuilleton writer says a man is in evening dress it now conveys nothing to the average reader For him it isn't evening dress unless it's immaculate evening dress In the wardroom of the *Catapult* the other day I said something about politicians, and their Number One repeated, 'Politicians' Oh yes, bloody politicians Rather, I quite agree with you' He really was not perfectly sure for a moment what a politician without the prefix meant "

"Quite true," Yarrow agreed. "And the bromidic effect of the right kind of phrase is marvellous Do you remember when Asquith at a moment of profound depression declared in a public speech, 'The war will be over a great deal sooner than some people seem to think'? It meant absolutely nothing, but it cheered up the country for a fortnight What do you think is going to happen in Russia?"

"I know so little about Russia," John replied. "But I've a feeling from the way public opinion is being worked upon to believe this revolution is a fine anti-German gesture, that things aren't too good. It's clear there's been a complete cessation of hostilities on the Eastern Front. Perhaps Stern will enlighten us when we reach Icaros He knows a lot about Russia Yes, I fancy it's just as well for us the Americans have come in "

"If they can make themselves felt before the Germans wipe our shipping off the seas," Yarrow said gloomily. "If they can, then I think the war ought to be over by the autumn of 1920."

"My hat, James, you're a glorious pessimist! You ought to be editing a Liberal weekly," John laughed.

"I wonder if we shall reach Rhodes without meeting

a submarine," Mervyn Iredale speculated "Old Kellaway said good-bye to me this morning as if it was going to be the last time "

"Well, don't forget they have a base at Budrum," Yarrow reminded him with a gusto of gloomy anticipation

"By the way," John asked, "are you going to continue to sleep in that deck smoke-room now we've turned it into the armoury?"

"I think so, unless you object."

"I don't object," John told him "On one condition "

"What's that?"

"That you don't practise the flute in your hammock."

"Why not?"

"Because I think the depth-charges and the hammer-bombs might object a bit too forcibly "

Mervyn Iredale like a good A D C laughed so heartily at this joke of John's that he choked over a bone of the red mullet he was eating, and had to be patted on the back before he recovered

"It is no good the fishes, yes?" Stamati the steward enquired anxiously

He was assured that the lunch was excellent, as indeed it was

After lunch they took chairs on deck and idled away the afternoon in a trance of islands, sea, and sky

"We ought to reach Rhodes by lunch time to-morrow," John said with a yawn of contentment "I wish old Kellaway was with us "

"If he were he'd have us out of our chairs every five minutes to see if something or other wasn't a periscope," said Yarrow "They told me he kept them on the hop night and day last week when they were going round the Cyclades "

"What would you do, James, if we suddenly did see a periscope appearing out of that thick light-blue water

which makes you wonder why it doesn't stain the side of the ship?"

"He'd take out his flute and use it as an opposition periscope," said Iredale, and delighted with such a picture of Yarrow preparing to meet the enemy, his laughter unhitched his chair and he came down with a crash on the deck

"*You'd* probably giggle," the flautist observed severely to the prostrate subaltern

"Well, do you know, I really believe that's what *I* should do," John declared "In fact I don't see what else we could do By the way, that reminds me I must look up the Greek word for 'ram' "

He felt in the pocket of his white jacket for the pocket dictionary he always carried. "Five words here Three literary and two colloquial I *must* get hold of the right word It wouldn't do to use the wrong one and start old Pneumatikos laughing He laughs like hell at Charles Kellaway's classicisms He sort of bubbles all over and then explodes like a volcano And when we've rammed them you can get going with the Maxim, Mervyn "

"Mervyn attacking a submarine with a Maxim would be like a medical student trying to spray the throat of an angry hippopotamus with antiseptic," Yarrow said, nodding sagely.

"You silly ass, my job is to prevent the crew boarding us," Iredale retorted

"Well, on a day like this," Yarrow said, "I'm not going to believe that there is such a thing as a submarine In fact a hundred years hence if anybody read through the reports in our files he would declare that the submarine was another example of the personification of the forces of nature "

They leaned back in their deck-chairs, dreaming and drowsing.

Delos and Mykonos astern to port, the tumbled mass

of Naxos on the starboard bow Light-blue velvet water. Drinking in the soft zephyrs like wine No cloud in the sky The *Argo's* screw pulsating with monotonous regularity No ship nor boat anywhere in sight Not even a dolphin in this light-blue velvet water East-South-East the course The hours glide in a long serenity. The tumbled mass of Naxos to starboard, darker now against the gold of the westering sun. South-East the course Golden-blue the silken water.

"Rheumatism demands I should go below," John announced at last

The others were still too lazy to move

John curled up on the settee in the saloon and started to read *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, but presently fell to dreaming of Zoe Perhaps when the war was over he and she might roam the Aegean like this in a yacht What were the exquisite lines of Propertius about travelling over the sea with his Cynthia? *seu mare per longum mea cogitet ire puella, hanc sequar* . how did it go on? No Propertius in Yarrow's hold-all. Zoe would overcome her dislike and dread of sea-travel Would she have done something to get rid of young Roussos by the time he returned to Lipsia from this cruise? May would be here soon Strange to remember now that when he had first made up his mind to marry Zoe he had welcomed the prospect of delay because marriage was seeming a full stop The marriage ceremony was rather elaborate in the Orthodox Church The bride and bridegroom wore crowns. It mightn't be so easy to find a house in Lipsia What about that empty cottage in the cliff garden opposite the old Turkish Consulate? He must see what it was like It might be the ideal place. What would Miriam think when she read his letter? But after all, it was many years now since he had made such a confident announcement about his emotions He must really write to Julius What would the effect of America's coming in be on him?

One never knew with Julius. He might suddenly turn martial . John drowsed off. When he went up on deck before dinner the western sky was a dull scarlet and against it all the islands black.

Soon after dawn John was awakened by Mervyn Iredale from his Keating-covered bed with a request from Captain Pneumatikos to come up on the bridge at once. He noticed that the *Argo* had slowed down considerably, and putting a British warm over his pyjamas he hurried out on deck. The sun had not risen. On the port-bow was a hump-shaped island across a stretch of lavender sea, and behind it the mountainous coast of Asia under a faintly roseate sky. The glasses were buried in the fat face of Captain Pneumatikos who, to judge by the bubbling of his body, was in a state of considerable excitement.

"I think a submarine is lying off Nisyros," he announced.

John took the glasses and searched the lavender sea round the island. He soon picked up a grey craft which certainly was not a trawler or a drifter, which was too small for a destroyer, and which certainly did suggest the conning-tower of a submarine.

"What is that land behind Nisyros?"

"The promontory of Cnidos."

Cnidos! The Demeter of Cnidos! That ultimate expression of sublime motherhood, the most perfect shape of peace under the sun. The thought of that image of the Earth-mother far away from here in the stale air of the British Museum strove in his mind with the agitated questions whether that grey craft was or was not a submarine.

"What do you think, James?"

"It looks like a submarine. But I distrust our capacity for judgment when submarines are running in our heads. And this twilight of dawn is very deceptive."

"Isn't it too wide for a conning-tower, sir?" Iredale suggested "And the whole craft not long enough for a submarine on the surface?"

"I think it is a submarine," Captain Pneumatikos insisted

"Their base at Budrum is not far north of Cnidos," John reminded the others "I always remember that report from Francis Biddulph about seeing them nosing their way through the reeds like duck "

"Yes, well, if Francis Biddulph saw them doing that it's enough to make me feel pretty sure there are no submarines round here," Yarrow muttered sceptically

"Oh, but there's no doubt they do make for these waters," said John "They're less thoroughly patrolled, because the Italians don't like our people coming down this way "

"Well, if it is a submarine we'd better sheer off towards Tilos," Yarrow said "We'll soon know if he's following us "

"I don't like the idea of sheering off without making certain," John objected "I'd have to report it to the V A and '*Argo thought she saw enemy submarine and bolted*' won't read well " He turned to Pneumatikos "Full speed ahead "

"But, Commander Ogilvie . . . "

"We shall be safer at full speed than half speed, Captain I shall try to ram her Get the canvas off your Maxim, Iredale Where's Bowes?"

"Ay, ay, sir," came the young signalman's voice from behind

"Be ready to flag this craft "

"Ay, ay, sir "

"This all sounds extremely professional," said Yarrow. "But my advice is to go full speed in the opposite direction and say nothing about it to the V A This professionalism will end by making a mess of us "

"Shut up, James Go and get a couple of hammer-bombs "

"No, that's being childish," he protested "You said yourself they weren't to be touched till the war was over "

John put down the glasses

"It's not a submarine at all I don't know what it is, but it's not a submarine It's not a submarine at all, Captain "

The Captain's bulk heaved in a seismic convulsion which by now they had learnt to recognize as shrugging his shoulders

"I've been torpedoed once," he observed gloomily.

But John was right It was not a submarine It was one of the armed motor-launches, M L 926, commanded by Lieutenant Hugh Mackay R N V R, a young Glasgow business man with a red pointed beard whose second-in-command, Sub-Lieutenant Denis Agnew R N V R, had been subject to the tyranny of school until a couple of months ago and was now, thanks to a yachting father, on top of the world in the Aegean Sea.

"And what the hell kind of ship is yon?" asked Mackay in amazement "Three-pounder in the stern Maxim in the bows. And flying the Blue Ensign with B C B in red letters Man, it's incredible!"

John explained what they were

"An Intelligence ship?" Mackay apostrophized "And what's B C B stand for? Bloody Cute B——s? Well, we came here for a hot bath, and we're going ashore as soon as the folks wake up."

They stared at Nisyros tree-embowered in the bland honey-coloured light of the risen sun

"But why this island particularly?" somebody asked.

"It's a thermal establishment. Natural sulphur-baths Man, it's fine for rheumatism. I never miss a chance to go ashore here," said Mackay.

"Well, come and have breakfast with us first," John invited

"No, no, if you want to be in Rhodes by early afternoon you'd better get a move on," Mackay advised. "But we'll meet again in Icaros if you carry on up there I've got a rendezvous with Commander Claude Conington Halliwell R N V R He's having a strafe with the consul "

"Stern's a friend of mine," said John, in a hurry to forestall unfriendly criticism.

Mackay looked at him quizzically

"You'd do well to be there by the end of next week Things will likely come to a head "

John asked what kind of a fellow Halliwell was, and Mackay winked

"He's won some races at Cowes We never had the honour of his presence at any regatta on the Clyde "

"Well, I hope we'll meet again at Icaros," said John

"Man, there's a café in a little town on the north side of the island where they have a wine which is as good as whisky," said Mackay reverently "We'll go there We'll go there and we'll make a night of it and forget all about the war, though mind you, the war's not so bad when you take it the right way My Sub thinks it's a most awfully topping war Don't you, Denis?"

Sub-Lieutenant Agnew grinned

"I'm having no end of a good time," he averred simply.

They left Mackay and Agnew to their sulphur-baths, and steamed on toward Rhodes

The *Argo*, being small enough to enter the old fortified harbour, moored alongside the quay instead of anchoring out in the roadstead

"Yes, this is certainly good," Yarrow declared, gazing round at the great walls and bastions which enclosed the harbour.

"This does whisper from its towers the last enchantments of the Middle Ages," said John

But they could not loiter in a Crusader's dream, for contemporary chivalry demanded they should make haste to present the Cross of a Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George to His Excellency General Stefano Paparazzo, the Military Governor of Rhodes. A smart young A D C had clicked spurred heels and saluted in the grave Italian fashion. His Excellency was awaiting them in the Castle, where he hoped they would partake of tea with him.

They walked up the hill to the Governor's headquarters and were received by him in a large room, the windows of which offered a view of the keep and battlements of Rhodes, of the rose-brown cliffs of Asia beyond a sea of ultramarine, and of roses everywhere in that island of roses.

His Excellency, who was shiny and dark and plump as a pickled walnut, was profoundly moved by the sight of the insignia of the higher class of the Order which had now been bestowed upon him. John made a speech expressing the gratitude of the people of Great Britain for his noble services in clothing the crew of the sea-plane carrier destroyed by Turkish guns, to which he was instructed to add the particularly warm personal esteem of Vice-Admiral Sir William Cordell with an expression of his deep regret that his naval duties had prevented his paying his respects to His Excellency in person. "Excitable little organ-grinder, what? But mustn't quarrel with him, because I want our patrols to be strengthened down there." An echo of the Admiral's last comment on His Excellency floated derisively across this great gothic room above the sonorous Italian of John's address, but he avoided James Yarrow's eye and succeeded in smothering the smile.

"*Troppo buono, troppo genule*," His Excellency was muttering in modest depreciation of himself.

Then he delivered his own oration. He desired John to convey to the Admiral his pride in fighting as a comrade in arms beside so distinguished a naval commander and regretted deeply that the preoccupation of the Italian fleet with the protection of the Adriatic against the Austrian fleet prevented his having at his disposal an Italian ship in which he could have made the journey to Mudros. And on behalf of the whole Italian nation he desired to assure their visitors of their pride in fighting as comrades in arms beside the glorious British nation against the common foe, not only of their respective countries but of civilization itself. He welcomed John and his brother officers to Rhodes, they would observe the efforts which had been made to bring a little cleanliness and a little decency into a city populated chiefly by Greeks and Jews. He hoped that John and his brother officers would honour himself and his staff by taking tea with them. He knew how much attached the English were to tea, and he hoped they would accept his offering of tea not merely as a compliment to themselves but also as a symbol of the fraternal cordiality existing between the two nations.

At this point orderlies appeared bringing in the tea, and His Excellency went out of his way to offer John a cup with his own hand. John after one sip nearly dropped it. He never took sugar in tea, and this cup must have been stoked with at least six lumps.

"Too hot?" His Excellency asked anxiously.

"Perfect," John declared, and, reminding himself that he was on active service and that the situation demanded judgment and nerve, he gulped the tepid beige syrup down.

The General pressed upon him a second cup which he could not refuse, because at the same time His Excellency was complaining of the anti-Italian attitude that had been taken up by Mr Francis Biddulph who he understood was

connected in some way, though he could not make out how, with the British Navy John promised he would look into the matter and asked the General to communicate with him in Lipsia if in future he had any complaints to make about Mr Biddulph. Meanwhile, he hoped His Excellency would afford Mr Biddulph every assistance because the information he was obtaining from Turkey was considered extremely useful. His Excellency and John shook hands cordially. It was time for the visitors to go and call upon the Chief of Police. As John was passing out of that great gothic hall he noticed underneath the chair in which James Yarrow had been sitting a cup of tea untouched.

The Chief of Police, who had been several times reported by Francis Biddulph as strongly pro-German and consequently to be always putting difficulties in the way of British Intelligence work, was a large powerful man as fair as a Prussian with a Kaiser's moustache of luxuriant growth, a grape vine of Hampton Court among moustaches. He like His Excellency had prepared tea for his guests and he like His Excellency had sugared it excessively. John had to drink two more cups for the sake of amicable relations in the future, and he noticed with indignation that James Yarrow was once again successfully avoiding drinking his portion.

"Your visit to the Chief of Police will do a lot of good," he was assured by Francis Biddulph as they made their way to pay a call on Veléiko, the former Russian Consul of Mileto, and his wife.

The road took them round that portion of the ramparts which was held by the Knights of England and Aragon in the great siege of close on four centuries ago, when five thousand Knights had resisted Suleiman and his hundred thousand infidels so long and so gloriously that when at last they did capitulate they marched out with the honours of war and the victor granted to Rhodes perpetual

immunity from taxation, a privilege which from 1522 to 1912 the Turks never rescinded

John's head was so full of bygone chivalry that he found it difficult to pay attention to the grumbles of Francis Biddulph, who was haunted by the fear of Italian aggression in Anatolia after the war. This particular Biddulph, the son of the one who had once jilted Mrs Strouzas, was a small man of about thirty-five whose business had been the export from Adalia of acorns for tanning and whose home had been in Adana. He had been established in Rhodes since the autumn of 1914 and his had been one of the first Spicer Bureaus in the Aegean. Of late his information had become increasingly valuable owing to the operations in Palestine, and his latest job had been to spread a rumour that an attack was planned on Alexandretta, the circulation of which had perturbed the Italians and the French much more than the Turks. Biddulph himself had been not less perturbed by a rumour that after the war Smyrna was to be given to the Italians as well as the whole of southern Anatolia. It was this rumour which he was relating to John on their way to the Veléikos while John was thinking about Knights of Auvergne and Germany, Knights of Castile and France, Knights of England and Aragon, Provence and Italy.

"Oh, I don't believe it," he said impatiently.

"It's very persistent," Francis Biddulph declared. "Of course I know these blasted Italians have been promised Adalia. But Smyrna and Miletos and the whole territory that was offered to the Greeks, that *would* put the lid on Asia Minor! Why the devil we couldn't stay friends with the Turks I don't know."

"I can't believe they'll agree to let the Italians have Smyrna, particularly now that the Provisional Government of Venizelos has been recognized," John said.

But he was wrong. At this moment Mr Lloyd George was just about to set out to a conference with representa-

tives of the French and Italian Governments in a stationary train at St Jean de Maurienne near the Mont Cenis tunnel, though inappropriately for such a fog of national jealousies and ambitions not actually in it. At this conference Smyrna would be promised to Italy after the war And this promise unjustly made but not more justly broken would for years irritate Britannia like a flea under her skirts

"The best thing would be to leave the Turks alone," Biddulph said. "I'd almost as soon give Smyrna to the Italians as to the Greeks "

"Well, you'll have to hide your prejudices, Biddulph," John told him, "or I shall send another man to Rhodes and give you an island in the Cyclades to administer I don't want to do that, because your work is good "

"Move me from Rhodes?" Biddulph exclaimed in astonishment "But Manners gave me to understand "

"Manners has nothing to do with it now," John interrupted "All your information will be telegraphed to Lipsia in future And you will draw your money from me You'd better put a good face on it You'll only lose that caïque of yours if you try to fight the Navy This area is being brought within our patrols, and all the smaller Spicer Bureaus will come under the B.C.B. at Lipsia The Admiral wanted this, and London has agreed "

Biddulph eyed John sideways

"I'm not going to interfere with you unreasonably," John assured him, with a smile "That is if you won't think you're still dependent on Manners in Cyprus But you'll run your show according to my ideas And you'll close down on this anti-Italian and anti-Greek talk "

"But I rely so much for the value of my information on my friendliness with various Turks hereabouts," Biddulph argued

"I tell you, I'm not going to interfere with your methods, provided you don't quarrel with the Italian authorities.

But if any more complaints are made I shall transfer you "

By now they had reached the villa on the outskirts of the town in which the Russian ex-consul and his wife were living

Here once again tea had been prepared, and when James Yarrow eyeing the samovar whispered that here at last they would get a real cup of tea, John resolved to pay him out for having escaped that beige syrup offered them by the Governor and the Chief of Police. To his hostess, a frail little woman in a dull-green smocked gown with smooth black hair parted in the middle, John said that Lieutenant Yarrow liked his tea with five lumps of sugar and plenty of milk. And this time when James pushed the cup under his chair John called attention to the fact that he had forgotten his tea and insisted sternly on his swallowing the tepid syrup.

Veléiko was pessimistic about the way things were going in Russia. He had no confidence in the men who were at present in control and believed they would soon find themselves ousted by the more extreme faction. It was here that John first heard of the Bolsheviks and of the possibility of their being able to seize the reins of power.

"Do not believe what the papers say about the revolution's being a revolution against the pro-Germanism of the Tsar's advisers," Veléiko said earnestly. "The war was the last desperate throw of the reactionaries. It is clear to me that Russia no longer has the will to continue the war."

"You must feel very much the impossibility of obtaining any authentic information here about what is going on," John said.

"It is terrible! It is terrible!" Madame Veléiko sighed. "And what may become of us who can say?"

"Yes, I thought there was a good deal of pretty fatuous

optimism floating around," Yarrow observed, nodding. Any hopes he may have cherished of a future for Russia had been drowned in that last cup of tea "In fact I don't see how the Germans can help winning the war now. If the Americans had come in six months ago they might have been in time. But it's too late now," he went on, still nodding his head with gloomy relish.

"But I thought you believed the war was going on until 1920," John reminded him.

"Even if it does that will only mean both sides are utterly exhausted, in which case there will probably be a world revolution."

Madame Veléiko's big dark eyes were liquid with unshed tears. There was not much money left, and on what would she and her husband and their three children live when that money was exhausted, unless the world returned to sanity and once more provided a secure livelihood for its officials? Might it not be prudent to abandon all idea of returning to Mileto and make an attempt to get to Paris where Sasha would be in closer touch with events? It was delightful here in Rhodes, it was a wonderful tranquil refuge from this dreadful war, but might it not be too tranquil? If the money came to an end before Sasha's future position was settled, Rhodes would be impossible. Madame Veléiko thought with a shudder of the swarming ghetto. Poverty here would be horrible.

"Pay no attention to him, Madame Veléiko," John advised. "He revels in the dark side. I think the war will be over this autumn and that Russia will be all the better for her political crisis and that you will be back in Mileto next year. I remember your house so well. There was a particularly brilliant bougainvillea flung across one side of the roof like a huge purple carpet."

"Oh yes, you remember our house?" she exclaimed, her eyes lightening.

"I was staying with the British Vice-Consul in the spring before the war"

"Mr Stern?"

"Yes, he's a great friend of mine He's in Icaros now I'll be seeing him within a week"

"Oh, please to make my regards to him," Madame Veléiko begged "He was so intelligent I'm sure he would give Sasha—my husband—very good advice"

"Yes, we had a great opinion of his judgment," the ex-consul added

The next morning was spent in exploring the island, and John finding that the little Auberge of England in the Street of the Knights, which had been turned into a mosque, was now empty and disused thought he would try to buy it It was a corner of Winchester or Wells or Oxford in the Levant, a piece of fourteenth-century gothic not a stone of which had been injured Unfortunately the present Greek proprietor was away on business at the other end of the island, but he left Biddulph in charge of the negotiations Here he would come with Zoe after the war when Citrano was overcrowded

In the afternoon they sailed for the island of Symi so that Biddulph could show John the caique he used for landing and taking off agents from the mainland It was the Greek Easter Eve, and they waited in the harbour to watch the candlelit procession wending its way round the rocky hillside toward the church Sometime after midnight, Biddulph still on board, the *Argo* left for the island of Cos The weather was still calm and clear. About three in the morning John was woken up by what he dreamed was a great beast attacking him, and putting out his hand in the darkness he found himself striking the keyboard of the yacht's piano. Jumping out of bed and switching on the light he saw that in fact the piano had advanced from the other corner of the saloon and was now pressing against his bed Not only that but all the chairs were

vibrating across the floor. The yacht sounded as if it was being shaken to pieces. Simultaneously Biddulph and Iredale appeared in the doors of their cabins, and from the direction of the deck was borne a sound of wailing.

"Good lord, what's happened?" John cried, rushing out of the saloon in his pyjamas followed by the others.

Up and down the deck figures were running and shouting as John made his way to the bridge where he found Captain Pneumatikos sweating and wheezing and ringing away at the engine-room bell.

"Submarine following us," he gasped. "More speed! More speed! More speed! She's doing fourteen knots."

"Fourteen knots?" John echoed. "Have you all gone mad? How the devil could you see a submarine on a night as dark as this? You'll shake the yacht to pieces. Tell them to reduce speed at once and to stop stoking the furnaces like this."

It was just a sudden panic. There was no intelligible evidence of how it started. Gradually the vibration quietened down. They went back to bed. Yarrow in his hammock had slept undisturbed.

Next morning when they reached Cos the sky had clouded over. The water in the roadstead was like tarnished copper, but for the azure withheld by sky and sea the fertile land granted an expanse of brilliant green between the white town clustered about the great castle of the Hospitallers and the long ridge of hills protecting it against the fierce Aegean gales. There was in Cos much more of the East than in any of the islands. Crimson fezes were to be seen everywhere. Minarets aspired in slender loveliness above the narrow streets across which vines had been trained to cast a shade upon their busy life. Each trade had its proper quarter, and as if there were no war excluding them from Asia the leather-workers

sewed away at saddles for the camels of Damascus caravans bound for Aleppo or Baghdad

Yet all this enduring life of the past was as nothing compared with the life of that gigantic plane-tree which legend said was already growing when the physician Hippocrates lived in Cos twenty-five centuries ago The trunk of it at the height of a man was one hundred and eighty feet in circumference There was room in the hollow of it to dine the thirty-six people whose united spans could barely enclose it Its branches were massive as the stems of primeval oaks Its foliage spread above a large public square It seemed not a tree but a grove It was older than the carving of ancient marble reliefs which had been set up round its base

"Well, James, we agreed the other day that all travellers were liars," said John "But this tree would baffle any traveller to lie about It would defeat Munchausen It would defeat an angler It would defeat an election agent"

James Yarrow nodded

"It would defeat one of our agents," he said solemnly

They left the mulberry-trees and lettuce-green fields of Cos with regret for so short a sojourn Here too, thought John, he would bring Zoe one day and worship her youth beneath that mighty plane-tree

On the way along the quayside they noticed that the guns of the old castle had been sunk in the quay to be used as bollards

"I wonder what they'll do with the guns of this war?" John speculated

"Boil them down and use them for the next," Yarrow answered at once

They left Biddulph on the island of Calymnos, a glaring, barren, busy, dusty place after Cos, with not a Turk to be seen The pursuit of sponges to sell to cities had cast an urban blight over Calymnos, and for the first

time the Italian *maresciallo* and his two *carabinieri* in their black and silver uniforms and weighty cocked hats seemed not very much out of place. In Cos they had looked like Offenbach gendarmes.

The wind was blowing a gale from the north when they left Calymnos, and the sea was running so high that they decided to make for Port Lakkı in the island of Leros instead of continuing the journey to Patmos as had been the original intention. They reached sheltered water just when it was becoming impossible to pretend any longer they were not feeling extremely seasick. In Lakkı they found H M S *Blackpool*, an armed boarding-steamer, to which John rowed off in the darkness to pay his respects to Commander Jeffcock who made him most welcome and insisted on his staying to dinner. They were just sitting down when a signal was brought in.

"Confound it, I've got a rendezvous. Never mind, we'll be back in a couple of hours. Get on with your soup."

John put down his spoon.

"I'm sorry, sir, but if you're going out to-night I'm not coming with you. I had just about enough of it when we reached Lakkı."

"Oh, be a sport. We shan't be more than a couple of hours."

But John was firm.

"No, I'm not going out just to be infernally sick. I want to go to Patmos to-morrow in time to have a few hours ashore before we go on to Icaros."

Jeffcock tried to persuade him to stay, without success, and he was rowed back to the yacht, where he found Yarrow and Iredale at dinner.

In the morning when John went on deck he saw anchored in the port not the *Blackpool* but the *Snapdragon*.

"Great Cæsar," Trehawke bellowed when he came up the ladder, "are you here with your comic ship? I'm searching for *Blackpool*."

John explained what had happened last night, and Trehawke looked grave.

"She had a rendezvous with me I hope no blasted U-boat intercepted my signal and waited for her "

But whether or not a U-boat had intercepted the signal was never known, for of H M S *Blackpool* all that was ever found was the cap of one of her crew

"If you're going to Patmos this morning you'd better keep a good look out," Trehawke advised. "It looks as if there was a Fritz about "

John decided to say nothing to Captain Pneumatikos. He did not want another panic, and his heart was set on seeing Patmos.

The sea was still fairly rough, and none of them was sorry when they reached the harbour, sailing past a headland of jagged porphyry rocks purple-seeming against the still vivid green of the vegetation

"Well, there was one vision spared to St John," Yarrow observed "And that was a fat *maresciallo* and two *carabinieri* on the isle of the Revelation "

They hired donkeys and rode up the steep cobbled track to the great monastery on the peak. They were shown into the guest-room, a light airy place with a row of double-windows looking across a white-flecked dark-blue sea from which rose islets of fantastic shapes that may have suggested apocalyptic images to the Evangelist.

The Abbot and some of the monks sat on one side of a wooden table. A bottle of liqueur was produced, a kind of brandy flavoured with cinnamon which they found good. After this refreshment they were taken round the dim church, the floor of which was scattered with bay-leaves and the walls hung with boughs among which the eikons gleamed. It had the look of being decorated for Christmas rather than for Easter, for there were few flowers. They were shown one of the early codices with their golden or silver initials and faded brown ink on what seemed a

vellum which had been stained with wine. A clapper summoned the monks to prayer. The Turks had forbidden bells which might ring for a Moslem massacre. The whole monastery was permeated by a faint odour of ancient excrement from privies in use nearly a thousand years. The centuries of unbroken similar existence in this place overwhelmed the fancy. These bearded grimy monks were linked with the dead thousands of their predecessors by a common discipline, a common ritual, a common faith, but most intimately of all by that ghostly prevailing effluence from the least dignified of their bodily needs.

After their entertainment at the monastery they descended the hill and half-way down dismounted from the donkeys and walked along a stony track to a cave wherein the Evangelist had beheld the Apocalyptic Vision. It was tended by a hairy old monk who pointed out the traditional sites associated with the Revelation. Here St John had slept, here written, here beheld. In one rocky chamber an altar had been erected. Part of the interior was dimly lighted with candles, but the recesses of the cave were dark. The whole place reeked of dankness, and upon it was the chill of death. They were glad to emerge again into the warmth of the sun, and drink in the salt sea air.

"I think if I had stayed long in there," James Yarrow said, "I should soon be seeing the stars shaken down from the heavens as unripe figs by a great wind."

Yarrow's remark was ill-omened. When the *Argo* put out from the shelter of Patmos the wind had risen again to a gale. After struggling in the teeth of it for a couple of hours and being swept repeatedly by heavy green seas, one of which carried away the Maxim, and sent it and Iredale who had grabbed it swirling over and over along the deck, it was decided to abandon any attempt to reach Icaros that night and to run for the lee of a small island called Prasino not far from the southerly entrance to the

Gulf of Miletos. Here in a roadstead sheltered from the angry north they dropped anchor.

"All right if the wind doesn't suddenly veer to the south," John said

But Pneumatikos was confident. The glass was high. These fierce northerly gales were characteristic of the Aegean summer and could be counted on to last but a short while and yield to calm weather.

A flock of sheep and goats was feeding on the grass and herbs that covered the slope of the land down to the crescent of grey pebbles along the shore of the small bay in which they were lying

Yarrow was too lazy to leave the yacht. So John took Mervyn Iredale with him to explore the island. When they landed three or four great shaggy dogs came rushing down to attack them, but they were driven off with stones, and presently they and the flock and a couple of shepherds disappeared over the brow of the slope

"There must be some kind of village on the other side," John said

They walked on in the direction the shepherds had taken with their flock and as they mounted the slope came into the wind again, which seemed to be blowing less strongly already. However, by this time the afternoon was well advanced, and John decided it would be more comfortable to remain for the night where they were anchored. So they pressed on up the rising ground and on reaching the brow saw the dark-blue waves breaking into snow-white blossoms of foam across the twenty miles between Prasinos and Ikaros. Eastward, Asia surged up in might and majesty of land, with all that added awe which comes from the consciousness of regarding the territory of an enemy

"It looks invincible," said John. "And yet . . . you see that low-lying island about fifteen miles away? Once past that, and within half an hour we should prac-

tically be in the entrance of the harbour of Mileto .
another four miles of gradually narrowing wooded cliffs
. a small heavily fortified island, and then round the
corner of the next headland south the harbour itself
but by this time I expect the German engineers have made
it impregnable I like this island we're on . a
pleasant pastoral spot Look, there goes the flock "

It was moving along the bottom of a green valley toward the south-east John and his companion following the high ground in the same direction were presently looking down on a diminutive harbour and a cluster of dwellings above which half-way up the high ground opposite amid terraced orchards and vineyards stood a large white house with a great roof of shallow cupolas that reminded John of *Grazia di Dio* on *Lipsia*

"I wonder who lives there?" said Iredale

"Or if anybody lives there in these times?" John added.
"We'll go down to the harbour and find out "

They followed a narrow track down the hillside, and were not sorry to find themselves out of the wind again when they made their way carefully over the nets outspread to dry toward a jetty of rough boulders along which were the dwellings of the fishermen, several of whom in baggy breeches were squatting outside at work on the repairs of nets or lobster-pots

Suddenly John turned to Iredale.

"Of course! What a fool I am! This is where *Chrysomali* lives," he exclaimed

The boy looked vague

"I haven't got the hang of these Greek names yet," he murmured apologetically

"*Chrysomali* Bey is one of our star suspects, Mervyn. He belongs to a Greek family which has always stood well with the Turks, and Stern keeps on recommending his expulsion from here, chiefly, I think, because he covets *Prasino* as a base for that corps of irregulars with which

he proposes to harry the Turks, and now I've seen the island I can appreciate his resentment at its being in what he considers as good as the occupation of the enemy. However, that corps of irregulars has been an unattainable dream since the days of Gallipoli, and the grounds on which he asks for Chrysomali's expulsion are his supplying enemy submarines, oh, not with fuel but with fresh eggs and vegetables and any straws of naval intelligence he can gleam "

"I say, suppose a submarine attacks *Argo* while we're away?" Iredale exclaimed "I haven't fitted my Maxim up again since that sea we shipped this afternoon "

"James wouldn't be able to use it if you had But I don't think you need worry If an enemy submarine sights *Argo* lying where she is he won't venture any nearer No, we won't bother about the yacht, but what we will do is pay a call on Chrysomali By what I've heard of him he must be rather a remarkable fellow "

"He sounds rather a — if he's working with these ruddy submarines "

"Oh no, I don't think he's necessarily that," John laughed "Anyway, I'd like to meet him "

As they set out along the road that wound up to the white house John could feel upon their backs, warmer than the westering sun shining down the green valley along which the flock had been driven by the shepherds to what they now perceived was a large fold, the inquisitiveness of the fishermen below about the object of their visit.

"I suppose he's been warned of our arrival," John speculated "I hope he'll receive us "

"Perhaps he'll offer us a drink," said Iredale "That wind's made me jolly thirsty."

"It wasn't the wind It was the salt water you swallowed when you and your Maxim did that comic double-turn along the deck this afternoon."

"By Jove, I thought I was going to be washed overboard," said the boy "Ever since I got that wound in the back I seem so damn clumsy," he added in a tone of mortification

"It's not altogether astonishing," John told him "What is astonishing is that you're as active as you are "

"Do you think I'll be able to go on in the Service after the war is over?"

"Will you want to?"

"Well, it's my job. It's rather sickening to pick on a jolly good job, and get knocked out of it first go off I don't suppose we'll have another war for some time, but I'd like to command my battalion in the next one I might even be a general You never know I'm just nineteen now. If the war goes on for another two years, and I should think it ought to do that with any luck, I might be back with my battalion when it comes to an end I'm really quite fit I don't think I'd have been knocked over by that sea this afternoon if I hadn't made a dive for my Maxim "

"Are you getting tired of the Aegean?"

"Oh no, sir, not a bit I've having an absolutely topping time But I *ought* to get back to my battalion fairly soon "

John had no heart to tell the boy that there was no chance of his ever being passed fit for service in the field, and therefore no chance of his being able to continue his career as a professional soldier

"My father seems to think I'm going into the paternal office when the war is over," said Iredale indignantly "Which is a bit thick "

"Well, you can rely on me to do all I can to assert your martial qualities "

"That's awfully good of you, sir I'll hope for the best. Hullo, here we are at this bird's house."

They had reached a gravel terrace flanked by evergreen oaks. In front of the long white house was an arched loggia broken in the middle by a flight of six steps, at the head of which a distinguished elderly man of medium height dressed in a snow-white fustanella with a short jacket of dark-blue broadcloth piped with crimson, a crimson waistcoat, and crimson garters was regarding their approach.

"This is a very showy-looking brigand," Iredale murmured. "Look at the pompons on his shoes."

As they drew nearer to the waiting figure they saw that his delicate features were impassive as stone, but that his dark eyes were burning.

"I must apologize for this intrusion," said John. "But we have just anchored in the lee of your island, and I thought I should like to meet you."

"I do not speak English," said Chrysomali Bey in perfect English with hardly an accent.

"Your English will be a great deal better than my Greek," John replied in Greek. "But if you dislike speaking English let us speak Greek or French. I'm afraid I can't speak German, and my Turkish is not fluent enough for courteous conversation."

"You are proposing to occupy my island?" Chrysomali asked, again in English.

"As you evidently prefer speaking English to putting up with my Greek," said John, "I will answer you in English. No, I have heard of no proposal to occupy your island at present, though no doubt you have good reason to anticipate we shall occupy it one day. You must really believe me, Chrysomali Bey, when I assure you I have called on you without any ulterior motive."

The owner of Prasino was evidently struggling not to allow his hospitality to overcome political prejudice, but hospitality conquered.

"May I offer you some refreshment?" he said at last,

in a tone of voice that sounded resentful not so much of their presence as of his own weakness

"That is more than kind of you "

Their host came down the steps, moving with a natural grace that made it absurd to imagine him in any attire less picturesque than what he was wearing

John offered him his hand

"Lieutenant-Commander John Ogilvie Lieutenant Mervyn Iredale "

"I find it difficult to bid you welcome to Prasino," Chrysomali said, taking the proffered hand "But against my better judgment I say 'welcome' "

"Before I accept your hospitality," John replied, "I must warn you that I am an Intelligence officer and that I know your sympathies are entirely with our enemies. At some future date it may be my unpleasant task to press for your removal from here to some place where those sympathies cannot be practically demonstrated. My visit to-day, however, is purely private, and I should not like you to think I had abused your hospitality."

"I accept your assurance," said Chrysomali "Have the goodness to follow me "

He led the way across the loggia into the large vaulted hall hung with weapons and trophies of the chase including some grand heads of moufflon. He clapped his hands, and a servant appeared, wearing like his master the fustanella

"We make an agreeable light wine on Prasino "

"This is a day for wine," John declared enthusiastically

And for the first time since they had met him Chrysomali allowed a hint of a smile to cross his face

They were entertained in a smaller room opening off the hall. Sitting in a comfortable armchair, John looked out across the wide loggia to the sea which from here seemed to divide the gravel terrace from the surging bulk of Asia beyond with no land between. The wind was rust-

ling the leaves of the ilex-trees on either side, but it seemed to be blowing ever less boisterously. At sunset it would probably die down altogether.

"Your seclusion is perfect," he said to their host. "The war must have been an intolerable nuisance to you."

"Intolerable. Utterly intolerable," Chrysomalı agreed fervently.

John looked at the pictures on the walls. Over the fireplace hung a painting of an unusually handsome man wearing a tall slim fez and a blue tunic laced and frogged with gold.

"My great-grandfather, who was in the service of the Sultan," Chrysomalı said.

The wine was brought in—a dry wine the colour of amber.

"To what shall we drink?" John asked. "I hesitate to drink to you, Chrysomalı Bey, because if you find yourself in trouble with our naval people you will think I drank you bad fortune. And if you drink to us and we are sunk by a submarine we shall think you drank us bad fortune. We can't drink to the success of our arms because we shall not be drinking in unison. Give us a toast we can all drink with sincerity."

"To the world before the war," said Chrysomalı.

"Why, yes," John exclaimed, lifting his glass. Then as he put it down he remembered with a sudden chill on the heart that he had drunk to a world in which he had not known that Zoe existed.

"Absit omen!" he muttered, staring out between the shaken ilex-trees at the rose-brown immensity of Asia glowing in the western sun. "And you were at school before the war," he added, smiling at Mervyn to conceal his sudden dismay. "Did you drink that toast sincerely?"

"I think I'd drink any toast, sir, in wine like this," the boy replied.

"Ah, it has come to me!" exclaimed their host "You are the gentleman responsible for the outrage on my friend Colonel Psyllas "

"I am responsible for the notion of kidnapping the Colonel from his bed last December," John admitted "But as we are confessing our crimes, here is the gentleman who actually carried out that delicate operation "

"Perhaps he will be entrusted with the task of kidnapping me from my bed," Chrysomali said, smiling grimly at Iredale "But I have watchmen who know how to shoot "

"Have you, sir?" Iredale exclaimed eagerly "That would make it much more sporting Collaring poor old Colonel Psyllas was rather like potting a sitting pheasant "

"Yes," Chrysomali continued to John, "you are really responsible for putting the Cyclades into the power of that mountebank lawyer Venizelos "

"That's one way of expressing it," John replied "But it was all done by kindness "

"Kindness to pull my friend Psyllas out of bed in the middle of the night and send him to Salonica wrapped in a blanket?"

"There's legend at work already in this mythopœic Aegean world," John protested "He was brought to Lipsia in blankets, but he went to Salonica in a suit of clothes."

"Are you proud of the part you played in dragging these unhappy islanders into the war?" Chrysomali asked

"None has been dragged in yet "

"But I hear the Venizelists are forcing them to join the army of this so-called Government "

"You do not want to see Anatolia redeemed?" John asked.

"I want to see nothing that will change things for the worse. Greece is incapable of holding Anatolia. It is a mad ambition which may easily destroy Greece. Look at

that continent" He pointed across the sea "Do you think we can hold a bit of the fringe of it against Turkey? Could Byzantium hold it? Could the Franks hold Jerusalem? Could you hold as much as the edge of the Gallipoli Peninsula? It is even madness to retain islands like Mytilene and Chios and Samos. They are used to the government of pashas Samos was independent under her own Prince except for a trifling tribute Will Samos be better off when ruled from Athens? If it were possible to create a homogeneous Greece secure against the jealousies of the greater Powers, that would be another matter. But such a Greece is geographically impossible I have no special devotion to King Constantine If I acknowledged any authority here on Prasino it would be the authority of the Pasha of Rhodes, and he has exercised none since the Italians occupied Rhodes five years ago But King Constantine is right in perceiving that the great Greece of that cunning rascal Venizelos is a lawyer's dream of robbing other people's property Even the occupation of Salonica was a mistake It would have been better in the hands of the Bulgars The Greeks who desire conquest have the markets of the world to conquer But there are Greeks who do not desire conquest, Greeks like myself who cherish a life such as I lead, or did lead until this accursed war came to spoil it Now in my own island where I am surrounded by a few people who look up to me as the father of a family, I am at the mercy of this fever which has seized the world. My family has enjoyed power in its day I want nothing except my flocks and my vineyards and my corn and the fish in the sea round my island If I choose to communicate with Austrian and German submarines, why should I not do so? I know perfectly well that if Germany is victorious in this war I shall not be disturbed on Prasino I shall continue living as I have lived for the last twenty years But if you are victorious and impose that restless lawyer on Greece, he

has followers to reward, and men like myself will be expropriated ”

“Isn’t that a purely selfish standpoint?” John suggested

“But what else rules our existence on this earth? We came into the world with the instinct implanted in us to fight for our survival. From the moment the infant fixes its mouth upon the nipple of its mother’s breast it is aware of one impulse, and one impulse only—self-preservation. You are English. Being English, you have a capacity beyond any other human beings to attribute to yourselves the fulfilment of a moral duty when you gratify your selfishness ”

“Suppose we allow that,” said John, “what guarantee have you that a German victory in this war will secure to you that ideal existence? I can’t help feeling that out here you confuse Germany with Austria. But whatever happens Austria is finished, and I think you’d find a victorious imperialistic Germany more fatal to your ideals than our victory. Surely one of its first undertakings would be the exploitation of Asia Minor. Turkey would become a German protectorate. However, leave all eventualities aside. Do you seriously believe that the supply of German submarines with fresh eggs and vegetables and perhaps a certain amount of information is going to influence the result of the war one way or the other?”

“Certainly not. But it is the only way in which I can express my faith and therefore I consider what I am doing a moral duty,” Chrysomali replied.

“Do not suppose I am trying to trap you into an admission,” John said quickly. “I regard what you have just said with the respect of a guest who has enjoyed hospitality.”

“I accept that assurance ”

“Nevertheless,” John continued, “it will be impossible for me to prevent action’s being taken against you by our

naval people The loss of any ship near Prasino will inevitably be visited on you Your island will be occupied, and you will probably find yourself with Colonel Psyllas in the custody of the Provisional Government The life you have built up here will be destroyed, and I will tell you frankly that personally I shall feel the utmost regret for that destruction I wish you had left the submarines to look after themselves, Chrysomali Bey "

Their host rose from his chair and went across to the window There he stood in silence looking out at the white-capped dark-blue waves Motionless he stood as one of the pictures of his own ancestors on the walls and thus beheld his kilted form appeared as remote from the present as they in their rich attire commemorating an outlived past

At length he turned abruptly away from the window.

"I have chosen to declare myself," he said "What happens to me as the result of that choice must happen But I have been touched by your sympathy, Commander Will you and the Lieutenant do me the honour of supping with me to-night?"

John hesitated for a moment Was he justified in accepting the invitation? But why not?

"We shall be delighted I wonder if your hospitality will extend to Lieutenant Yarrow who is still aboard the yacht?"

"Most emphatically yes I will send one of my men to bring him to my house "

It was a memorable evening.

"The best meal I've had since the war started," James Yarrow declared

After supper they watched ancient dances and listened to ancient songs in the great dining-hall. At two o'clock in the morning escorted by kilted figures with lanterns they walked back to the yacht The wind had dropped. The sky was clear.

Their host accompanied them to the beach off which the *Argo* was anchored. The lanterns of his followers starred the grassy slope above.

"Farewell, Commander. Farewell, Lieutenant Iredale, till you come to fetch me away in a blanket like Colonel Psyllas."

"I don't want that job at all," said young Iredale.

John shook Chrysomali's hand.

"Fortunately I can feel sure that it never will be *our* job," he said. "I suppose you wouldn't care to give me your word that no more U-boats will be supplied with fresh eggs and vegetables? If I had that I would make a hard fight to get you left in peace on Prasino."

"What happens must happen," Chrysomali replied. "I do not intend to embarrass you with promises which might haunt your conscience lest they should not be kept. Farewell. I have shown you what you are helping to destroy, and I bequeath to you the memory of it in years to come."

The dinghy grounded on the beach. The three officers stepped in. From the deck of the *Argo* they watched the lanterns jiggling up the path home. The sound of an ancient song was borne back to them. A decreascent moon yellow as wax was hanging over Asia.

"Are we really destroying all this?" John turned to ask Yarrow.

"I'm sure we are."

"And for what?"

"Higher dividends," said Yarrow.

"But that motive applies to both sides."

"No doubt. I'm not suggesting it's anything except a choice between two evils."

Dawn broke over a placid sea. By six o'clock the *Argo* was on her course.

At eight o'clock, when they were about ten miles from the north coast of Icaros, Iredale, who was on deck,

shouted that a mine was drifting past a few yards to starboard

The ship was put about, and they all went on the bridge to take pot-shots at the brute with rifles. The mine was visible about fifty yards away, its horns showing plainly with the sun behind them.

"I believe you have to hit one of the horns in order to explode a mine," said Yarrow, taking aim.

He fired and missed. John missed. Iredale missed. Pneumatikos missed.

It was Yarrow's turn again. He fired. There was a roar. A column of water about two hundred feet high spouted up. The glass in the chart-house was smashed like a windscreen in a collision between two cars. A shower of iron fragments rained down upon the deck. Yarrow was rather pale.

"I don't think I ever got such a surprise in my life," he said.

"We must have been a bit too near," John murmured. "Never mind, the brute's dead now. It probably broke loose from the mine-field laid in the Gulf of Mileto."

"It wasn't more than two yards away from the yacht's side," Iredale said, "when I first saw it bobbing along in the water. If we'd hit it we should have been blown in two."

All three of them were somewhat pensive over breakfast. Death seemed to have been sitting in this saloon waiting for them that morning.

At Icaros John was glad to find the *Snapdragon* in the harbour of Chora when they arrived, and Trehawke as S N O. If there was going to be an argument with Halliwell it would be helpful to have an old friend presiding. The sloop *Dandelion* which had been stationed here had moved down to Leros in place of the lost *Blackpool*.

"The *Blackpool* might have been hit by a mine," John suggested after making his report of the *Argo's* adventure a couple of hours before.

"It's possible," Trehawke agreed. "We'll signal your news up to Mudros. But I think it was a U-boat. One of our trawlers came in yesterday afternoon badly knocked about. You can see her across the harbour. If it hadn't been for the heavy sea running she'd probably have had a much worse time of it. Between here and Patmos I was a bit worried about you people."

"It's evidently our lucky week," said John. "We anchored under the lee of Prasino."

"That's where the blighter lives who's suspected of being in touch with U-boats. The Consul here has put in several strong memos about him. I expect if it weren't for this row between him and Halliwell we'd have cleaned up Prasino by now."

John told Trehawke of the hospitality they had enjoyed last night.

"Bit risky, wasn't it?" Trehawke commented. "You'd have felt a bit of a fool if your friend's brigands had scuttled the yacht while you were at supper."

"Yes, but that sort of thing only happens in magazine stories."

"Oh well, you're the hush-hush king down our way, and you know more about these gentry than I do. But I wouldn't have had supper with the blighter."

John saw he should do neither his late host nor himself any good by further argument. So he shut up on that topic and asked Trehawke his opinion of the row between Emil and Halliwell.

"Well, it's this way, old boy. I'm neutral. I don't greatly care for either bird, between you and me and these two pink gins. Halliwell's a bouncer. I think he's competent up to a point. But these damned M.L.'s are more trouble than they're worth. No offence, old boy. But there are far too many bloody amateurs butting in on this war. These M.L.'s haven't got one U-boat between the lot of them, and they're responsible for half the reports

we get about submarines being seen here there and everywhere They really are just a blasted nuisance "

"Yes, two French destroyers shelled one of my officers in an M L off Zea a fortnight ago," John laughed

"There you are Sea-lice That's what these R N V R. yachtsmen are I've got quite a decent fellow attached to me here M L 926 Mackay, a Glasgow chap. A really decent egg and a good seaman But I'm lucky When I was S N O, Port Hiero, for a time I had a couple of fellows who were no blasted use at all A couple of bloody acrobats would have been more use And I think it's a mistake to give 'em an amateur Chief Scout like this bird Halliwell He's too big for his boots And blast it, the ruddy man is a Commander Senior rank to myself But my god, I gave him senior rank up at Port Hiero Yes, he had the bloody nerve to come aboard my ship and squint at me through that bow-window he sports in his eye and tell me he was a teetotaller "

"That must have been a bit of a shock "

"My god, Ogilvie, you didn't get half such a shock when Yarrow blew up that mine this morning Let's have another gin The memory of it sends a chill down my spine But though I don't like Halliwell, I'm afraid I don't much care for that bird Stern either. Well, for one thing he's a Jew, isn't he?"

"He's a first-class man," said John earnestly. "I know him intimately We were at school together "

"But he can't drink gin either," said Trehawke in the voice of a weary and disillusioned man "And it's no good, Ogilvie. You may think I'm prejudiced and all that sort of thing, but I can't stand Jews In the Bible, yes. All right perhaps But they ought to stay there "

"I'm surprised to hear a Cornishman say that," John observed

"What have Jews got to do with Cornishmen?"

"A great deal, when you remember Marazion "

"Marazion?"

"Jews' Market That must have been a relic of the days when the Phœnicians traded with Cornwall for tin. But seriously, Stern *is* a good man"

"I'll take your word for it But Halliwell accuses him of using Intelligence work to do a bit of profitable smuggling on his own"

"And you believe that?"

"Well, you see, old boy, after all he is a Jew And that's what I say They can't resist the dibs"

"I'll find out the origin of this preposterous slander," John vowed "And I think you'll agree with me when I've finished my investigations You admit Halliwell looks for trouble?"

"Oh, absolutely I told you, he's a teetotaler But apart from this smuggling there's this cattle-raiding business You see this consul chap worked up a series of raids on Turkish farms. Oh, they were quite well carried out, I believe But unfortunately he raided the farm of the father of a woman on Icaros And she's married to an Englishman called Bertram Edwards"

"An impossible woman!"

"I dare say she is. But this raiding has gone to her head Every time any of us walk past her house she stands on the balcony and screams, 'Give me back my father's cattle, you thieves' Nobody warned me about this And, by gad, she started screaming at me the first day I went ashore I got a bit of a shock, old boy She'll scream at you probably Of course, Buzfuz stopped those cattle-raids last year But they've sent this poor female barmy. And there you are However, you'd better talk things over with Stern himself"

John found Emil in the same state of nervous exasperation about the news of the Russian Revolution as he himself had been this time last year over the news of the Irish Rising

"This is a moment when I can't take these petty squabbles of the Navy seriously," Emil declared "What do Senior Naval Officers and amateur yachtsmen matter when the future of the world is being settled in Russia? And here am I powerless to move I must stay here looking at a lot of schoolboys playing at war when I ought to be in Russia myself You know nothing about it, but if you knew anything you'd realize from the scraps of genuine news that get through what a terrific struggle is imminent "

"Will Russia quit from the war?"

"I hope so "

"That won't be too good for us "

"It will be splendid for us "

"How do you make that out?"

"If Russia quits because the great mass of Russian people refuse to fight any longer there's every reason to suppose that France will quit, and Italy, and perhaps even England "

"Leaving Germany triumphant?"

"Not at all The people of Germany will rise like the rest It's the moment for the people to rise, and I'm stuck here. You worked yourself up over Ireland, but that rising was without the slightest significance It's on a par with a revolt in Poland or Bohemia Another petty expression of nationalism—a mere miniature of this war The Russian Revolution is a revolt of the human mind against nationalism It's an example to the people everywhere."

"Do you know anything about a party called Bolshéviki?"

"Of course I do They are the group that will lead the world revolution And I'm stuck here What a fool I was not to resign before the war and go to Switzerland! I might have been in Russia now "

"Meanwhile, however, you *are* here," said John.

"And we have to settle the future of your Intelligence work "

"What's it got to do with you?" Emil asked coldly.

"Damn it, Emil, I've let you know once or twice that all Spicer Bureaus are being centralized in Lipsia, and Icaros will have to come in with the rest "

"With what object?"

"The more efficient handling of Intelligence "

"Thanks very much I have been handling my own Intelligence efficiently since November 1914, apart from interference by that little cocksparrow Manners and this M L fellow Halliwell who wants to have the *Samaena* under him "

"I perfectly realize that, and you might have enough confidence in me to feel sure I've not the slightest intention of interfering with you The point is that Wade in order to save his whole show in the Aegean has had to accept the protection of the Vice-Admiral, and the V A insists on there being a central Bureau which he can strafe when he's in the mood for strafing That will stop fellows like Halliwell from interfering "

"Thanks, I can deal with Halliwell myself "

"But you won't be able to if he gets the Admiral behind him. You *must* lose We found that at Salonica with the soldiers What's your objection to being nominally under me?"

"My objection is that you know a great deal less about Turkey than I do "

"I admit that, but I'm not proposing to censor your material At present when you have information of military value you send it to Wade. You can go on doing that as long as I have a copy at Lipsia But you also obtain a certain amount of information of value for the Navy locally, which you hand to the S N O, who hands in on to Braddon at Mudros. That brings you under the Navy without giving you any corresponding advantage

You can go on handing your stuff to the S N O , but copies will be sent to Lipsia, and I can guarantee you against Halliwells "

"I tell you I can deal with that kind of fellow myself," Emil repeated irritably

"You understand that he accuses you of smuggling on your own account?"

Emil struck the bell on his desk

"Condo, will you go and find Lieutenant Hoggart?" he said to the little clerk

"And he is using that row you've had with Mrs Edwards to stir up prejudice Trehawke, the present S N O "

"Who seems a good specimen of an ignorant dolt," Emil interjected

"He's an extremely good fellow Without him we should never have carried through our counterstroke at Lipsia If you treat him as a donkey he'll probably kick you, but he dislikes Halliwell and if you could bring yourself down from your heights you'd find him helpful "

"You all seem to forget," said Emil, "that my work for Wade is only a part of my job I happen also be Acting Vice-Consul here "

"Yes, but what's the good of pretending that you would be Acting Vice-Consul if it were not for the Intelligence work? I really think you are being unreasonable, Emil, and what is more behaving in a spirit of petty vanity I understand your feeling about Russia, but I can't see the slightest prospect of your being able to get to Russia till the war is over We are both in the war, and that's that "

Joe Hoggart in his uniform as a Lieutenant R N V R came into the room before Emil could reply to this

"Joe," he said, "will you explain to Commander Ogilvie this silly tale about smuggling?"

"Damn it," John exclaimed angrily, "I'm not asking you for an explanation of this Tom Fool story. You don't suppose *I* think you indulged in private smuggling?"

"It came from jealousy, Commander Ogilvie," said the old licorice-grower soothingly. "You know what it is out here when you have to sack a man. Well, we had to sack one of our chaps in the *Samaena*, and he started putting tales around and we thought it beneath our dignity to take any notice, and this Commander Halliwell came along and wanted to bring the *Samaena* under his orders and we treated him a bit off-hand, as you might say, and that did it. And then we had the bad luck to raid a lot of cattle on a Turkish farm, not knowing that Mrs Edwards's Greek father had made an arrangement with the Turkish owner to take on that farm. And that started *her* off. It's all been a bit unpleasant, but as I tell Mr Stern, it'll blow over. The new Governor Mr Venizelos has sent over is a very nice fellow and anxious to help in every way."

"Do you mind if I speak freely in front of Hoggart, Emil?" John asked.

"Say what you like."

So John put the position before the old licorice-grower, who joined his arguments to his own in favour of the proposed new arrangement.

"I'll have nothing to do with it," Emil declared. "I shall telegraph to the Minister in Athens, requesting to be relieved of all Intelligence work here, and I shall do my best to get transferred. Joe will do what he thinks best."

"Joe Hoggart is in a different position from yours," said John sharply. "He will automatically come under my orders and so will the *Samaena*. Naturally I shall make no change in the way you have been running the show here, but all telegrams and reports must be sent to me at Lipsia. I think you're making a mistake, Emil, in taking

the line you have. But that's your affair. It's not that I mind your unwillingness to be nominally under myself, what I mind is that by chucking your Intelligence work in this way you'll give fellows like Halliwell a chance to say you funk'd any enquiry."

"What on earth do I care about the tittle-tattle of fools?" Emil asked loftily.

Joe Hoggart tried to reason with him as tactfully as an old family doctor with a neurotic patient. But Emil would pay no heed.

"In any case most of our useful work here is done," he said. "The corps of irregulars is now a scheme of the past. These cattle-raids have been frowned on by the Navy. And such Turkish Intelligence as we get hold of for the Palestine campaign is at its best scrappy and inadequate. My only regret is I didn't put that fellow Chrysomali off Prasino."

"Bad bit of work that," Joe Hoggart agreed.

"Perhaps Halliwell will bestir himself in that direction now that he will no longer have me to annoy," Emil said.

"Poor Chrysomali," John put in. "I had supper with him last night. I think he's a tragic figure."

"No, no, sir, a bad bit of work," Joe Hoggart insisted earnestly. "He's been in regular communication with enemy submarines ever since they came out here. And in fact it's a disgrace he hasn't been put off Prasino long ago. But the Governor here has taken the matter up with the people in Salonica now, and I fancy the Admiral will soon get a formal request to remove him. There ought to be a M.L. there. That would be sensible. But good lord, it's like looking for a needle in a haystack to look for common sense out here."

"Still, I can't help sympathizing with him," John insisted. "After all, it's not a very serious crime to give a few eggs and vegetables to a submarine. And any information he could give must have been pretty useless. But

what I sympathize with is his desire to keep up the life he has been living on that island of his."

"Sentimental pretence," Emil scoffed. "Yes, he *would* appeal to you, John. Just the romantic fraud that would He's one of those meaningless survivals! A kind of Greek Jacobite. There is a lot to be said against the war, but if it clears the world of people like Chrysomali Bey and puts the Bolsheviks in power in Russia its sins may be forgotten."

"I see no particular reason in logic," John retorted, "why Chrysomali Bey should not be allowed the pleasure of running his own show free of interference as much as you, Emil. You don't like being interfered with any more than he does. He's suspected of communicating with submarines. You are suspected of smuggling coffee to the Turks. However, we mustn't get tart with one another. By the way, you'll bequeath to me the services of your man in Mileto as a collecting centre?"

"But I hope you won't let Peterman down."

"Inasmuch as Joe Hoggart will still be in charge of communicating with the mainland, that seems unlikely," John replied.

"That'll be quite all right, Commander Ogilvie. Quite all right, that will be," Joe Hoggart replied in the same soothing tones.

John felt inclined to pour out his feelings about Emil in a letter to Miriam, but in the end he thought better of it. Perhaps his withdrawal was really the most satisfactory solution of the trouble here. At any rate it would put Halliwell in his place. He drafted telegrams to Wade and the Admiral, and went on board the *Snapdragon*.

"You can count on my support, old boy, against this teetotal blighter," Trehawke declared.

However, next day Mackay came in with news that Commander Halliwell had returned to Mudros, and a

brief signal to say that Vice-Admiral approved Lieutenant Hoggart and *Samaena* being at service of British Control Bureau put a stop to the new war within the war which had been threatening

"And what about running you round to that place I was telling you about?" asked Mackay

"I'm game if Commander Trehawke gives us leave," said John

"What place is this?" Trehawke asked

"That very suspicious place on the west of Icaros, sir," Mackay answered "Mandra *Argo* can't get in the harbour So I offered to take Ogilvie round for the day to have a look what's doing He's had several reports of U-boat activity round there "

"Isn't there a place at Mandra where you get very good wine?" Trehawke asked

"Is there, sir?" Mackay asked innocently, tugging at his red beard

"Is there!" The hefty skipper of the *Snapdragon* grabbed an orange and hurled it at Mackay. It missed him and went overboard, the gulls screaming after it as it hit the sun-bright water "Righto. Go and investigate the reports of the U-boat activity, and if the wine is any good, jolly well bring me back some "

"I hear you can get a good brandy there too," said Mackay

"I'll give you my opinion later," Trehawke promised "Don't go and foul the boom if you come back tight after it has been closed "

"I wish you'd come too, sir," John said.

"I wish I could, old boy, but it won't do for all of us to go joy-riding "

John suggested inviting Emil, and Mackay being agreeable he went along to the Consulate. Emil, however, declined.

"Come along, you'd enjoy the trip."

"If I'm not to be trusted with the *Samaena* I'll retire from maritime adventures," Emil said.

"Have you had an answer from the Minister yet?"

"Yes, he is letting the Foreign Office know, and I imagine they'll put me somewhere else I wish they'd send me to Switzerland."

"But you couldn't start playing around with revolutionary elements now," John said.

"Of course not. But I should hear more of what is going on."

"I wish you'd come with us to-day."

"No, no. But why don't you take Joe Hoggart?"

So Joe Hoggart joined the party, and over a glassy sea the motor-launch seemed to move past the northerly coast of Icaros as rapidly and smoothly as a train. Mandra was reached in about three-quarters of an hour—a small white town about fifteen miles from Chora, the capital of the island, with a fertile country of vineyards and tobacco-plantations behind it. They put in to order the evening meal and then carried on toward the great mass of Mount Aspro which rose in green ravines and gorges to a bald top of white stone six thousand feet high. This mountain formed the western extremity of Icaros and on its southern side fell in dizzy precipices, as it seemed sheer to the peacock-blue water below. For some six miles beyond Mandra Aspro allowed a long beach, now of grey sand now of greyer boulders and shingle, to run along its base, and where this beach widened at the foot of a wooded gorge leading up into the heart of the mountain M.L. 926 dropped anchor in a roadstead formed by the projecting tongue of land planted with olive-trees which brought the long beach to an end. On the other side of this plantation the precipices of Aspro bearing away along the southerly coast of the island were washed by the sea. In the middle of the grove was a

stone barn where the oil was stored after the harvest to be conveyed to Mandra when the weather suited

"Well, I think we're out of the war here," said Mackay, as they trudged up the loose sandy beach, carrying their lunch.

A bastion of the mountain cut off the view of the coast toward Mandra and the East. The olive-grove with precipices behind enclosed them on the west. Northward a sea of lapis lazuli stretched without even the cloudy shape of a single remote island to break its solitude. And before them the gorge pierced the heart of the mountain and rose in thicket on thicket of fresh green toward that bald white summit out of sight and unimaginable from here. The song of birds, the babble of a small stream losing itself in the sand, the sigh of the placid sea upon the beach—these were scarcely heard against the louder silence of the mountain airs.

John was reminded of that gorge on Pelion where the centaur Chiron schooled the young Heroes.

"Captain Spicer's Argonauts revisit the haunts of their childhood," he murmured to James Yarrow. "I should be less surprised to meet a centaur here than a submarine."

"Och, we had a very circumstantial report of a submarine's crew landing here about three weeks ago and bathing," said Mackay. "But we're not talking about submarines to-day. There's no war here. To-day's a daft day of peace. And boys! Water's all we drink, because that wine in Mandra to-night isn't going to be spoilt before it's on the table. I'm telling you."

"The proper way to celebrate a day like this is with games," John declared.

"My gosh," Mackay groaned. "What do you want to play games for? My notion was to keep quiet."

"Argonauts versus All Hellas," John proclaimed. "Putting the stone, cock-fighting, bull-fighting, long-jumping . . ."

"Steady, Commander," said Joe Hoggart "You forget I'm fifty-five years old."

"You'll be exempt from certain contests So will Mervyn because of his wound "

"But I'm fit for anything," Iredale insisted

"Blast it, you're like a lot of keelies down the watter," Mackay protested

"Oh no, we must take 'em on," insisted young Agnew, his Sub

"Hurrah," Iredale shouted "Argonauts versus All Hellas at manly sports and pastimes "

So through that sun-dyed day stolen from the war the Argonauts contended with All Hellas, and at four o'clock each side had won five events

"Dennis," Mackay told his Sub, "go and get a rifle We'll make this the decider "

And at shooting—the target being a half-pound tobacco-tin—James Yarrow secured the highest marks, thus giving to Captain Spicer's Argonauts victory over All Hellas.

Then for an hour they lay stretched out upon the sand, listening to the loud silence of the mountain, which had again asserted itself above their shouts and laughter, while the westering sun shone with fierce gold across the grove of olives

"All aboard!" Mackay warned them, jumping to his feet In spite of the weather burnt into his cheeks by weeks of cruising, this day had contrived to deepen their hue

When they reached Mandra and went ashore in the twilight, they felt drunk with sun and air, but beneath a trellis netted with the vivid green of young vine-leaves they saw a table on which many bottles of a noble Icarian wine, its hue a flushed amber, challenged them boldly They ate green-spined garfish and red mullet, crayfish whose flesh was as white and tight and sweet as coconut,

some kind of rissole wrapped in vine-leaves, some other kind of rissole wrapped in what looked like brown paper but did not taste at all like it, green peas and young carrots, figs, and cheese from which the cream was still oozing, and all this they washed down with deeper and deeper draughts of that sunset-coloured Icarian.

"When Admiral Sophocles R N V R came to Chios with his squadron that time the Athenians were besieging Samos and was entertained there by his Consul, I'll bet he drank no better wine than this," said John

"And who the hell is Admiral Sophocles R N V R?" Mackay demanded "Ogilvie, you're drunk Halliwell came to Chios and the Consul gave him a hell of a good dinner and a red Chian wine which was very remarkable, though a bit fiery for my taste, and damn it, Halliwell wouldn't touch it I wasn't in a position at the time, being his junior, to observe to him in no undecided tone of voice that he was a son of a gun But I make that observation now, Ogilvie, and what is more I repeat that observation"

"I'm quoting you a story from Athenæus, Mackay," John replied "And I assert that you are drunk"

"And who may this fellow Athenæus be?" asked Joe Hoggart "I don't believe we have that name on our files"

"Athenæus is the property of Bertram Editor, the Edwards of Athenæus," John explained

"Why, that's the husband of Mrs Edwards," Joe Hoggart said indignantly.

"So I understand"

"Gentlemen," said Joe Hoggart, "I rise with the permission of my friend Lieutenant Mackay to address the company In rising to address the company on this very memorable occasion I wish to qualify any remarks hereafter to be addressed."

"Hoggart! You're fou'," Mackay shouted.

"Lieutenant Mackay, that has no bearing on the remark I rise to make. My friend Commander Ogilvie, my superior officer as it was not in the beginning, but is now and ever shall be, my friend Commander Ogilvie has mentioned Mrs Edwards. Gentlemen, I do not wish to introduce a false note to spoil the general harmony, but I must qualify my remarks by asserting as a licorice-grower of thirty years' standing that Mrs Edwards is a . . . well, she's a bitch, and that's the short of the long of it. That woman, Commander, dropped a huge watermelon on my head from her balcony last year because I was instru-instrumentable in driving a number of steers off her father's farm. She has screamed after me from the balcony, 'Thief! Robber! Brigand!' and such-like derogatory expressions. Very untrue and highly derogatory. Gentlemen, I thank you for listening to my remarks, and I propose the health of Lieutenant Mackay of His Majesty's ship 926. It's a silly name for a ship, but there you are, we're at war, and even the ships are feeling the effect of it."

"I rise to second that health," said Mervyn Iredale, rising in his chair. "Speaking here as a soldier I wish to say that the Army appreciates what the Navy is doing to keep the home fires burning, and in the immortal words of George Robey I wish to say here and now that another little drink won't do us any harm."

Mackay now rose

"Gentlemen, I thank you for the readiness with which you have responded to the toast so eloquently proposed by my friend Lieutenant Hoggart, bloody drunk though he is, and so eloquently seconded by Second Lieutenant Iredale, who is also bloody drunk, but that's neither here nor there as the monkey said when he . . . when he . . . where's my Sub? Sub! What the hell did the monkey do when he said it was neither here nor there?"

"I don't remember, sir," said young Agnew

"And why don't you remember? Because you are the only officer here who is sober. In point of fact and without mincing my words in any derogatory fashion you are either an ossified officer or an offside ossifer. Or both. And that's the result of being sober. And why are you sober? Damn it, the problem of getting through the submarine-boom in the harbour of Chora is not your problem. It's the problem of the Bos'n. Fortunately you are not a Scotsman and therefore your disgraceful sobriety is no reflection on the greatest nation in the world. Ogilvie! Yarrow! Stand up, you damned unpatiotic bastards and endorse that remark. But what *did* the monkey do? Here we are fighting a bloody war, and none of us can answer that question. Where's Demetriou? Demetriou!"

The host came running

"Here, Hoggart, Ogilvie, you spout this lingo, ask Demetriou what the monkey did when he said it was neither here nor there. He doesn't know? Well, tell him to bring some more of that brandy of his. The Army. Yes, the Army! Gentlemen, I raise my glass to the British Army. We respect what the Army is doing to keep the Navy from doing it for them. That is the spirit in which our glorious patriot Robert Bruce won the battle of Bannockburn. The biggest smash in the jaw the English ever had. But as that blasted monkey said when he was doing something or other he ought not to have been doing that is neither here nor there. My friend Lieutenant Yarrow will now propose the health of our Allies."

"Gentlemen, I have much pleasure in rising to respond to our friend's suggestion," said Yarrow. "I consider it a very good suggestion. I do not believe that any better suggestion has been mooted in the course of this most enjoyable evening. In fact it is such a good suggestion that it no longer partakes of the nature of a suggestion but assumes the dimensions of a request."

"Hear, hear," Mackay shouted "This is the best bloody speech we've had yet"

"And in mootng that suggestion, or as I prefer to say, in making that request I propose the health of the French who gave us . . . Stendhal," Yarrow continued "And the Italians who gave us Dante And the Serbians who gave us

"Sarajevo," John suggested

"And the Russians who gave us caviare And the Belgians who gave us refugees and the Portuguese who gave us well, I'm getting rather exhausted Anyway, oh yes, the Japanese and the Greeks and the Americans And well, all the Allies It's impossible to confine them within the limits of a single speech The great thing is that if you drink to each of them you'll do your bit to keep this war going, which I reckon ought to last until 1926 September 1926 Anybody laying against that?"

Yarrow sat down and peered round uncertainly at the symposiasts. The combination of the fumes of the wine with the effect of wearing his horn-rimmed glasses over his monocle had somewhat blurred their outlines

"I rise to supply the names of various Allies which my honourable and learned friend has omitted," said John "I wish to drink the health of the Athenians and wish them success in the great fight they are putting up against the Peloponnesian League The Spartans by their resort to unrestricted submarine warfare have blotted themselves with infamy We are out to destroy militarism and for the ephors. the ephors, I say the ephors, I repeat

"Drunk," Mackay observed, chuckling to himself "We're all drunk, but he's the drunkest of the lot Efforts, you clown, not heifers."

"I disregard that derogatory interruption," John continued with dignity "And I repeat that for the ephors to

accuse the Athenians of arrogant navalism is a piece of impudence The siege of Potidæa ”

“Potted what?” Mackay shouted “Are you referring in a derogatory fashion to venison?”

“I ignore that second derogatory interruption, gentlemen. It’s completely irrelevant I might say . . . irreverent. In the words of Mr Asquithios, we shall not sheathe the sword until the siege of Potidæa has shown the Central Powers that when they snapped at the British Empire they bit off more than they could chew Bulldogs snap and countersnap. Our colonies are standing by us. Our kinsmen over the Aegean Sea are rallying round Australiemnos, Canadamos, South Africhos. . . .”

“Gosh, how drunk you are!” Mackay ejaculated in admiration

“Silence, Mackay! The Adelphic Oracle is speaking. What do you know about Argonautics? Nothing What do we know about Argonautics? Nothing. What does anybody know about Argonautics? Less still Gentlemen, I give you the Confederacy of Delos coupled with the name of the King of the Belgians, President Wilson and the Russian Revolution. I think that has filled in the gaps left by my very good friend and fellow trierach James Yarrow in his extremely sketchy speech. And now let’s take on All Hellas at billiards.”

They adjourned to a room at Demetriou’s where there was an antique billiard-table across the worn cloth of which the balls rolled with a thunder that resembled actual cannon-balls

“Tell me,” said young Iredale to Joe Hoggart “I know I’m rather lit up, but have they sewn up the pockets?”

Joe Hoggart chuckled

“No pockets on this kind of table,” he replied “And the balls are much bigger ”

“Yes, I’d noticed that,” Iredale said pensively. “But I thought the balls might have been drinking too ”

Mackay went to sleep in a corner of the room. So they took down a Greek flag which was pinned up on the wall and covered him with it. John found a deck-chair which he dragged out on the terrace and after trying to count all the stars in sight he fell asleep too. The billiard-balls rumbled over the table as the Argonauts represented by Yarrow and Iredale fought a losing battle against All Hellas represented by Joe Hoggart and Agnew. When the Argonauts had been defeated by fifty cannons to sixteen the players slept too.

It was midnight when they all woke up, their heads clear of the fumes of wine.

"That was a good day's work," Mackay observed to John as the motor-launch swept back toward Chora over a sea of such a sheeted calm that the images of the stars mirrored therein streamed across it like comets' tails.

"A memorable day," he agreed. "One of those days that escape from time and remain apart from it for ever. Are you enjoying the war, Mackay?"

"Och, I like it fine out here. It'll be a grand memory. But we're the lucky ones. I reckon that out here war is more like what it used to be, the kind of thing we used to play at when we were kids."

The next morning they heard that while they were amusing themselves on that strand and in that mountain gorge a Turkish plane had flown over the harbour and dropped eight bombs in an attempt to hit the *Snappdragon*.

"And would our anti-aircraft gun do its bit?" Tre-hawke demanded. "Oh no, the blasted thing kept staring down at the deck like a mesmerized chicken with its beak on a chalk line. 'Can't you turn that bloody gun on him, Mr Watson?' I asked. 'I'm doing my best to coax it up, sir,' said my gunner. And you must understand this damned Turk wasn't five hundred feet up. How he didn't get us I don't know. The bloody bombs were hitting the water inches away all round us."

"Well, we brought you back some of Demetriou's brandy That'll cheer you up," John told the disconcerted captain of the *Snapdragon*.

"And I want it," said Trehawke "By George, old boy, I do. That Turkish airman nearly blew my inside out He buzzed over just after I'd finished lunch and was taking a gentle snooze under the awning Don't talk to me about Johnny Turk being a gentleman I call two o'clock a damned ungentlemanly hour to call on anybody. But that reminds me, there's a signal from the V.A. that you're to proceed to Mudros as soon as possible and report immediately on board *Swallowtail*."

"Do you think this man Halliwell has been making trouble?"

Trehawke shook his head pessimistically

"He may have. You can't tell what a teetotaller will do "

"Well, we can't reach Mudros before dusk I think I'll look in on our people at Chios and arrive in Mudros to-morrow morning. I can take Samos and Mytilene on the way back to Lipsia. Did that message from the V.A. arrive yesterday?"

"No, this morning "

"Then that's all right. He won't expect me till to-morrow morning "

"Have you got steam up in the *Argo*?" Trehawke asked.

"Oh lord, no, I forgot."

The captain of the *Snapdragon* grinned.

"You'd better stay where you are till this afternoon and go quietly up to Mudros to-night. A U-boat, perhaps the one which had the scrap with the trawler, was sighted between here and Chios early this morning You come and have a quiet spot of lunch with me. I don't expect we'll have another visit from that flying blighter, but if we do we're ready for him this time "

However, lunch was eaten in peace, and coffee on deck afterwards was not interrupted.

At the Consulate there was a telegram from Lipsia to say that reliable information had just come in from Athens that Heinrich Wahl, carrying a forged American passport under the name of Evangelos Velotas, was reputed to be a passenger on board the *Hellas* which was due to sail to-morrow from the Piræus to New York, calling at Mytilene for passengers

The *Hellas* was the liner in which the British residents of Athens had been given asylum during the flare-up last December

"I'd like to nab that fellow Wahl," said John "It would be an oblation to the memory of poor Lingfield But if we get the ship stopped by the Navy and the information is bad it'll mean a strafe Tantalizing, but I suppose we'll have to let him get away "

Emil, who had had a telegram from Wade thanking him for his good work, was in a much more agreeable mood The brief air-raid too had raised his spirits

"I wonder how the English achieved a reputation for competency "

"They gave it to themselves," Yarrow put in

"Yes, I suppose that was it I remember once when I was staying on Imbros with Selward one of the first German submarines that arrived out here came up and had a look at the gun they had mounted on the point to guard the boom. But the day before there had been an air-raid and the gun had been re-hung or whatever they do to guns So it would only point at the sky when the submarine showed himself."

John was willing to criticize with James and he was willing to criticize with Emil, but he was by no means willing to hear criticism from James and Emil in collaboration

"Yes, that's all very well, but you forget to jeer at the

U-boat which hadn't the guts to open on the Imbros gun or at the Turkish airman yesterday who couldn't hit *Snapdragon* at five hundred feet You're always reminding me of Napoleon's remark, James, that we see our own mistakes but we don't see the mistakes of the enemy."

"There's something in that," Emil admitted "By the way, John, now that I can give my whole attention to consulate work so long as I'm here, I'd like Withers to get a short holiday I wonder if you'd mind taking him up to Mudros, and if you're visiting Samos on your way back you could drop him there Joe can get him back in the *Samaena* at any time."

"Of course we'll take him But I hope he doesn't mind bugs They're growing very lively and cunning They now crawl over the skylight and drop on me from above And they're much better judges of direction than that Turk yesterday "

"Bugs never worry me, Commander," said Withers "I don't know whether there's something poisonous to bugs in my blood, but it's a fact I woke the other morning and found a dead one on the pillow Now it takes a lot to kill a bug I once knew a bug that lived in a Bible for two years "

"How did you prove that, Mr Withers?" Yarrow asked

"This way, Mr Yarrow When I first came to Miletos I turned very heavily against women for reasons we needn't enter into now, and somebody told me if I wanted to hear a woman properly told off to read Ezekiel in my Bible And one night while I was reading what Ezekiel had to say about whores a whopping bug walked across the page I shut the Bible with a thump, and as it happened it was nearly two years before I opened it again And believe me or not I opened it at Ezekiel and that bug walked on from where I'd stopped him on the text '*I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and*

thou shalt also give no hire any more.' Yes, he walked on as cool as you like, and I had to take a screwdriver to him in the end "

"I believe you, Mr Withers," said Yarrow "But thousands wouldn't "

"It's a proper fact, Mr Yarrow The sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel the forty-first verse, because I made a note of it "

The *Argo* reached Mudros at six o'clock next morning, and at half-past seven John reported on board the *Swallowtail*

"I think the Admiral's still in his bath, sir," said the Marine servant "If you'll wait here, sir, I'll let him know you've come aboard."

The Admiral's quarters were airy and pleasant, and John was proposing to sit down on a chintz-covered arm-chair when the bellow of Sir William was heard from the direction of the bathroom.

"Is that Ogilvie?"

"Yes, sir."

"Come here I want to see you."

John went along to the bathroom where he found Sir William rubbing himself with a towel and looking like a large freshly boiled lobster in a napkin

"Look here, what do you mean by this last report from Constantinople?" he shouted, puffing and blowing the while with the vigour of the drying process he was carrying out upon his portly form "Brrrr! Your agents are no damned good! Brrrr! Whoof! No damned use of any kind whatsoever!"

"I'm sorry to hear that, sir I suppose you're referring to the latest information telegraphed to Colonel Braddon."

"Of course I'm referring to that. Brrr! Whoof! What else could I be referring to? Who's the fellow that sent

that information? Sack him! Sack him! Brrr! You're letting yourself be swindled."

"This agent was considered particularly reliable. I'm sorry to hear you don't consider his last information any good, sir."

"Brrr! Whoof! Brrr!"

The towel swooped round the bathroom like an albatross before it once again swathed the Admiral's rubied nakedness.

"Consider his information no good? I consider his information fraudulent. Have you paid him anything yet?"

"I've kept him supplied with money, yes, sir."

"Then don't. Do you hear? Don't! Cut the rascal off! Don't let him have another halfpenny! Brrr! He's a thief! Brrr! He's a dishonest lying ruffian. Do you know that my flying-people made a raid on Constantinople the week before last and blew the guts out of the *Goeben* and completely disabled the *Breslau*?"

"We received that information from Colonel Braddon's office, sir."

"Well, good god, and now this tinpot, broken-down vagabond you're paying to send us authentic information has the damned impudence to say that in the recent air-raid over Constantinople not a single direct hit was registered on *Goeben* or *Breslau*."

"You don't think the flying-people were too optimistic, sir?"

"God damn it, Ogilvie, are you trying to back the malicious, lying twaddle of a dirty, venial spy against the report of my airmen?"

"No, sir, but I must insist that up till now we have always found this man extremely cautious and extremely accurate whenever we had the opportunity to check his information."

By now the Admiral was in a vest and cotton drawers, and was pulling on his socks.

"And in fact you *are* prepared to back him against the report of my flying-people, eh? They report that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* have been completely disabled, and you calmly send in a report from this damned fellow Number Twenty-six or whatever he is to say that neither ship has been touched "

John was wondering if the Turkish airman of yesterday had reported to his commanding officer the destruction of the *Snapdragon* and his lips twitched in a suppressed smile

"And now, my god, you think it's funny," bellowed the Admiral, waving a protestant leg with such vigour that the sock not yet safely pulled over the heel parted company with his foot and landed in the bath.

"Goodger!" he yelled "Goodger!"

John, afraid of bursting into laughter, hurried from the bathroom to look for the Marine

"Goodger, the Admiral wants you," he said in a tremulous voice, and praying for strength to resist laughter he followed him back to the presence

"Bring me another pair of socks, Goodger. This damned sock fell in the bath "

The Marine clicked his tongue reproachfully at the offending sock and went off for reinforcements

"I must apologize for smiling, sir But I was thinking of Trehawke in Icaros yesterday His after-lunch nap was disturbed "

"Was it? I'm jolly glad to hear it Serve him right All the same, it was a piece of infernal cheek that Turkish fellow raiding Icaros Still, no damage was done?"

"No, sir Not a splinter," John said, with a faint emphasis on the negative

"Eh, what? Are you still trying to argue that my flying-people made a mistake?"

The Admiral, with tousled hair and pink cheeks, was sitting with his hands on his knees, his legs wide apart,

and looking rather like a picture in a book of nursery rhymes

"Well, sir, as a general rule agents err on the side of optimism. They always think they'll get a bit more money if they tell us what we want to hear. In this case no doubt Twenty-six may have made a mistake, but I can't help feeling that if the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* had been badly damaged he would have known."

Goodger came in with the socks

"Thanks. And you can lay a place for Lieutenant-Commander Ogilvie. He'll be having breakfast with me."

John felt that such an announcement indicated he had not fallen hopelessly from grace

"Yes, I see your point, Ogilvie," the Admiral went on. "But after all they may have succeeded in hiding the damage done, and this fellow of yours may just be handing on the official report."

"Certainly, sir, that's quite possible, and if you're convinced that the flying-people have not been over optimistic why pay any attention to Number Twenty-six? But I felt bound to send in his report to Colonel Braddon."

"Oh, I'm not objecting to that. But now that I have your organization under my wing I want to be sure that the money being spent on it is being spent wisely."

"Certainly, sir."

"And you say this chap is usually reliable?"

"He has been doing good work for over a year now."

"Well, the only thing to do is to send one or two new agents in and check up on this *Goeben* and *Breslau* business."

"It's easier said than done now. The Bulgarians have an extremely efficient coastguard service where we used to land agents. And since we left Salonica it has been difficult to recruit good men. We can get stuff out from Mileto most easily. Stern left a very good man there, but he refuses to send any agents to Constantinople. He's

been getting nervous It's not surprising, considering he has been working for us since November 1914 "

"Oh yes, Stern, what? I hear he's chucked Intelligence work "

"Well, sir, if you'll forgive my plain speaking, it was impossible for him to work with continual interference from Commander Halliwell "

"Halliwell's a very able fellow He's capital at his job "

"Yes, sir No doubt But the particular job on which Stern was engaged was *not* his job, and he did that very badly You can't bring a craft like the *Samaena* under the same discipline as the M.L.'s And these stories about smuggling are preposterous. I went into the matter thoroughly "

"Yes, well, that's over and done with now. I've made it clear that you are responsible to me for the *Samaena* What's the name mean? Is it some kind of fish? "

"No, sir, it was the name for the Samian galleys which were said to resemble wild boars in shape and used to have their prows carved in the shape of a boar's head "

"Really? Ingenious devils those old Greeks, what? I've often meant to read it all up But I'm kept too busy. You know what I mean? These damned submarines are getting worse and worse The losses this month have been terrific. Highest yet I was furious about *Blackpool* Good fellow, Jeffcock, poor chap Did you know him? "

John related what had happened at Leros

"Well, you evidently weren't born to be drowned. Probably born to be hanged, what? Well, come along, let's go and have some breakfast "

The Admiral was himself again in radiant whites, the rich red of the Bath and the scarlet of the Legion glowing with an added warmth below his rosy countenance, and no trace of the emerald of St Maurice and St Lazarus in his choleric blue eye.

"Kidneys and bacon, eh? Kidneys and bacon all right for you? Well, to come back to what we were saying about this Constantinople business, it's clear we must get some fellow in to find out what *has* happened. I mean to say, I don't want to sit here thinking the *Goeben* and *Breslau* are unfit for sea and then find them popping out of the Dardanelles one day. I should look a damned fool "

"Well, sir, if you authorize me to recruit agents in Salonica I'll send Yarrow up with a splendid fellow I have. You saw him when you were in Lipsia. He was wounded in Athens and made a marvellous recovery, thanks to Miss Harford's skilful nursing "

"Yes, I remember him. And I remember her. Little fair gal, what? Had a pair of very nice ankles, you know what I mean? I always say if I were judging a beauty contest I'd jolly well see that good ankles could earn as many marks as any points, eh?"

"Yes, sir, I agree "

"I mean to say, you give a pretty gal bad ankles, and it's the old story of the golden idol with feet of clay, what? Take a pair of sparkling eyes and all that. But if she hasn't got good ankles, she's just a lighted lamp-post, what? . Yes, well, if you think Yarrow ought to go up to Salonica I approve of that "

"I'll send him and Priphtes up as soon as we get back to Lipsia. I want to look in at Mytilene, Chios and Samos on the way. I didn't wait to go there after I received your instructions yesterday "

"Well, get Yarrow to Salonica as soon as you can, because I want to have this confirmation of my flying-people's report "

"It's bound to take a certain amount of time, sir. There may be difficulties in finding the right man. Then they have to be got into Turkey, and then the information must be got out by way of Icaros "

"How long do you think it *will* take?"

John considered the question for a minute

"I'm afraid we can hardly hope to hear anything before the end of May at the earliest, even if all goes as smoothly as possible"

"But do you mean to tell me I won't know till the end of May whether or not the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* have been knocked out?"

"I'm afraid not, sir Unless you arrange for another raid"

"I can't risk another raid yet awhile We're starved for planes out here My flying-fellows will do their best, but I'm not going to ask them for the impossible All right If you can't get me the information earlier, you can't. Everything else satisfactory?"

"Yes, sir The controls in the islands are working well Captain Majendie is always very good to us By the way, sir, I hit on rather a sound wine in Icaros, and I wondered if you would accept a dozen bottles?"

"That's very kind of you, Ogilvie I'll accept them with pleasure"

"I'll have them sent over from the *Argo*"

"Thanks very much You're dining with me to-night, of course?"

"Oughtn't I to get back and arrange about sending Yarrow up to Salonica? I want him to catch the *Whinchat* when she goes up with the Malta bags And if we leave to-night I can be back in Lipsia in good time and call at the other islands. I have to discuss some matters with Colonel Braddon, but I thought I'd make a shot to get as far as Mytilene to-night"

"Well, perhaps you are right"

John was wondering if he could reach Mytilene before the *Hellas* left and somehow manage to arrest Heinrich Wahl

So by noon the *Argo* sailed again, and if John had re-

quired any additional spur to quit Mudros as soon as possible it would have been provided by Colonel Braddon's suggestion that they should take a walk after lunch. Colonel Braddon was a Blue Marine as spare and desiccated as a cricket and, to judge by the current tales of his walks over the barren, melancholy hills of Lemnos, with legs as muscular as a grasshopper's. These walks were taken at a rapid pace for miles and always in silence because Colonel Braddon himself did not want to talk and his companions were always too arduously engaged in keeping up with him to be able to talk.

"You'd better have a light lunch here, Ogilvie" ('here' was Colonel Braddon's depressing corrugated-iron office ashore), "and after lunch we could get in a good walk before tea."

"Thanks very much, Colonel, but I think we must sail at noon if I'm to get this Salonica business arranged and everything else done," John had replied firmly.

And the Colonel had looked over his shoulder and said to the Red Marine in his power, "Well, then you and I will go for a walk, Lowndes."

"All right, sir."

But when his Colonel's back was turned Lowndes had shaken at John a reproachful fist.

"Queer mania this English mania of exercise for exercise's sake," James Yarrow observed as they sat down to lunch in the saloon of the *Argo*, which was now leaving the tawny bulk of Lemnos astern. "If Braddon sat in an armchair for the rest of his life he wouldn't be any fatter than a cigarette. Well, what did you think of Mudros, Mr Withers?"

"Lively place, and I don't think," Withers replied.

"When the original Argonauts landed at Lemnos," John related, "they found it inhabited entirely by women who had murdered their husbands."

"That wouldn't have interested Mr Withers," said Yarrow "He's a woman-hater See Sixteenth Ezekiel "

"Ah, now, now, Mr Yarrow, that's carrying it a bit too far I don't hate women nowadays Though that's not to say I'm a marrying man And what happened, Commander, when they found all these women?"

"They had a good time," John replied "In fact they all had sons by them Jason, the leader of the Argonauts, pulled off twins by Hypsipyle, a princess "

"There you are now. They knew a thing or two in days gone by," Withers commented

Nothing more was said about women at the time, but later John noticed Mervyn Iredale confabulating with the clerk in the bows, and when he saw that John was looking at him he hastily took the canvas cover off the Maxim as if the topic of conversation was Mars instead of Venus as John suspected

"I think young Mervyn contemplates a night out in Mytilene," he remarked to James Yarrow

"Extraordinary creatures, boys of that age," Yarrow observed. "You only had to mention those husbandless wives on Lemnos, and now he can't get the idea of women out of his head "

When they reached Mytilene, the lamps were beginning to twinkle in the windows, and the great Genoese castle on the headland above the harbour loomed through the haze of dusk like a castle in a fairy-tale

There was no sign of the *Hellas* As John was expecting Iredale asked him if he had any objection to his spending the evening with Withers They were going to dine together "

"And after dinner?" John enquired

Iredale looked embarrassed

"Well, Withers knows of a place where one can hear some singing and that sort of thing "

"All right. I shan't want you. I shall get through my

work with Coles this evening, and we'll sail to-morrow morning about ten. But don't be later back than eight."

"I wasn't thinking of staying out all night, sir "

"I dare say not, but singing and that sort of thing have a way of lasting longer than one anticipates "

As the revellers were going down the ladder to the dinghy John called Withers back

"I suppose this place you're going to is all right ?"

"Quite all right, Commander It's a nice homely little place A few girls to sing and dance, and I know the woman who runs it. Sosanna. Bit of a character "

So Withers and Iredale went off to spend a gay evening, and John gave his attention to the problems of port-control which Lieutenant Ferdinando Coles had for him Coles was not a Levantine, but the son of a Trieste shipping-agent, an Englishman who had married an Italian woman He had been working in Venice for Captain Spicer and had been given a uniform in the R.N V R and sent out from there to the British Control Bureau in Lipsia He was a handsome braggart, a good specimen of the *inglese italianato* who is proverbially reputed to be *diavolo incarnato* John had felt doubtful of the wisdom of sending him to take charge of so important a place as Mytilene, where opportunities for graft would be numerous and tempting However, he was a capable fellow, and was likely to be no worse than some of the Levantine lieutenants whose services he had had to employ Brackenbury must deal firmly with his accounts, and he could rely on jealousy to expose any flagrant instance of graft.

This evening when Coles showed him round the port-control office he had to admit that it presented all the outward signs of efficiency. Coles himself in his new naval uniform looked so like the hero of a musical comedy company on tour that Yarrow whispered to John he would probably break into a tenor solo presently. John was eyeing with disapproval the small piece of red hand-

kerchief peeping from the breast pocket of Ferdinando's uniform. An officer in charge of one of the remoter Cyclades had recently been sporting two rows of ribbons none of which had he the right to wear.

"I don't like that handkerchief of yours, Coles," he remarked. "And I like less the way you've arranged it to imitate the ribbon of the Legion of Honour."

"Oh, sir, what an idea!" Ferdinando Coles exclaimed, with that boisterously insincere laugh of his.

"A red handkerchief looks ridiculous with naval uniform. Get a white one," John told him curtly. "And now what about the *Hellas*? I expected to find her here."

"We had a coded telegram from Barlow that she wouldn't leave the Piræus until to-night. She's expected about six to-morrow morning."

John did some thinking. If the *Hellas* had called at Lipsia he would have had no hesitation in sending on board to arrest the man calling himself Evangelos Velotas and apologizing afterwards if he found that he really was Evangelos Velotas. But an unwarranted arrest in Mytilene might lead to complications. Mytilene was a mixture of controlling authorities. There was a large force of Provisional Government Greek soldiers training here. The French had established a kind of military occupation which included such unusual units as a corps of Annamese. The British Navy were in occupation of Port Hiero. It had been extremely difficult to get the principle of port-control in Mytilene accepted at all, and if a mistake were made within a month of the control's establishment it might easily lead to Mytilene's being removed from the B.C.B. in Lipsia, the effectiveness of which depended in there being no gaps. In spite of the patronage of the Vice-Admiral there had already been difficulties with one or two S.N.O.'s of other areas who considered themselves the equal of the Lipsia S.N.O. and strongly objected to the centralization of authority in his area. There was

probably an American Consul in Mytilene and if this pseudo-American citizen appealed to him for protection it might stir up endless trouble. Might it not be better to arrest Evangelos Velotas on the high seas? It would be tantamount to an act of piracy for the *Argo* flying the Blue Ensign to stop the *Hellas* and board her, but if he got his man that would soon be forgotten. He could point out that, since they had to run the risk of being treated as pirates by the commander of a German submarine and summarily shot if captured, they were surely entitled to benefit of piracy when it came off. He had a barber in the *Argo* Petros Dondas who had shaved Heinrich Wahl many a time and should be able to pierce any disguise. Yes, he would take him off the liner before he reached Mytilene. Lingfield had lost him during the September expulsions of enemy agents from Athens. Wahl's escape had fretted him all through that nerve-racking autumn which had ended in his death. This time he should not escape, and Lingfield's spirit should be appeased.

"Well, I can't wait till six o'clock, Coles. I want to get away from Mytilene at dawn."

It suddenly occurred to John that he had told young Iredale that he should not be sailing until ten o'clock. He would have to be warned of the new arrangement.

"Do you know of a house of entertainment kept by a woman called Sosanna?" he asked Coles.

The question switched the light on in Ferdinando's dark silky eyes; but the snub over the handkerchief had made him cautious.

"Why, yes, I've heard of it," was all he thought it wise to admit to this prig in authority over him, who, thank God, was leaving Mytilene at dawn. "I believe it's on the hill somewhere above the Turkish quarter."

"After dinner one of your men can show Yarrow and myself where it is."

"I could take you there myself," Coles suggested.

John felt inclined to refuse, but Coles would put only one construction on such a refusal, and the escort was accepted.

It was nearly midnight when they reached Sosanna's vine-wreathed terrace. Sosanna herself, a fat and amiable bawd in black satin with a necklace of garnets buried in the folds of her neck like raspberry jam in a roly-poly pudding, welcomed them effusively and clapped her hands. Four girls emerged from a two-storied booth at one end of the terrace which had the look of a piece of stage scenery and sat down at the tables to partake of the refreshment offered to them. Two of the girls were markedly Slav in appearance, refugees probably from devastated Serbia; their companions were Greeks from Anatolia. Sosanna enquired if her guests desired song and dance, but John who thought the girls looked weary explained that they had called for two friends of theirs and that they would sit out on the terrace and drink a glass of wine until they were ready to come.

"No shampagna," Sosanna announced dolefully.

John assured her he was delighted to hear it and bade her bring the best she had of the island vintage. While they sat drinking he extracted from the girls the tale of the misfortunes which had brought them finally to this vine-wreathed terrace and to that wooden booth where when the night was done they slept in wood-lined rooms scarcely big enough to hold more than the trestle-bed on which they gained their livelihood, put away like puppets in a box.

"This is what war can mean," John sighed, after one horrible tale simply told of rapine and starvation and loss of all that was familiar in childhood.

"Ah, but you've got to remember, Commander Ogilvie," Ferdinando Coles put in, "that whether there'd been a war or not these girls might easily have come to this for a living. And I know the old woman doesn't treat them

badly. They might have fared worse. The prettiest girl isn't here.

"I don't suppose she is," said Yarrow drily.

And at that moment Iredale came out of the booth, a slim fair girl with high cheek-bones and slanting eyes holding his arm.

"Botticelli," Yarrow commented aside to John.

"I'm sorry, Mervyn, to disturb your evening," John said, "but we're sailing at dawn, and I think you'd better come back soon. Where's Withers?"

"He's having his fortune told," Iredale replied. "I say, isn't this a jolly little girl? Anastasia her name is."

Anastasia! Anastasia to commemorate the Resurrection, and her birth at some happy Macedonian Easter-tide!

"This is the little girl I was telling you about," said Coles, unable to hide his consciousness of being from a feminine point of view the ideal male present. Anastasia, however, had evidently taken a fancy to Iredale's almost fragile boyishness. Professional coquetry had been forgotten. She will remember him, John thought, through the heats of summer as she might remember the flowers of her home when she was a little girl before the war.

"We couldn't understand a word of what the other was saying, but she's such an awfully jolly little girl that it didn't matter," Iredale told the others, with the air of a naively given confidence.

Withers now emerged from the booth with a large-size bold brunette wearing amber ear-rings, and John rose to lead the departure. Feeling that they must have disappointed the unchosen girls he put a hundred-drachma note on the table for the good of the house. This cheered up everybody.

"Gooda-bya," Anastasia said, clinging to Iredale. "You com see Anastasia tout de suite, please?"

"Never mind, Ana," said Ferdinando in a lingua franca

she may or may not have understood "I'll come and see you "

If she did understand him she greeted his remark as one who had craved a forget-me-not might receive a stale gardenia offered instead.

"A nice homely little place, Commander," Withers observed as they made their way past the fountain in the Turkish market-place

"Oh, a home from home," John agreed.

At five o'clock next morning when off the gulf of Chandarli they saw the great fourteen-thousand-ton liner *Hellas* majestically approaching to starboard

"Bowes!"

"Ay, ay, sir "

"Signal that vessel to stop."

"Ay, ay, sir."

The *Hellas* was just about a hundred and ten times the size of the *Argo*. It was a fox-terrier speaking to an elephant. The elephant paid no attention.

"Captain Pneumatikos put the yacht to port. I'm going to fire across her bows. Mr Iredale, stand by the gun. Signal her again, Bowes "

The elephant moved on

"Give her a shot, Mr Iredale, and Mervyn," he shouted as his gunner rammed himself against the padded shield, "for God's sake, don't hit her!"

The three-pounder made a grand noise for the size it was, and a little fountain rose from the velvet sea about fifty yards ahead of the elephant. This time the elephant was impressed. It waved its trunk. In other words a string of flags was run up, and the speed slowed down

"*Hellas* wants to know who we are and what we want, sir," Bowes read out

"Tell her it's the British Control Bureau yacht *Argo*

and that an officer is coming aboard Lower the boat, Captain Pneumatikos Yarrow, Iredale, come with me, and Petro, I want you too. Tell *Hellas* to let down her starboard ladder, Bowes "

The *Argo's* boat was pulled swiftly across the space of azure velvet sea by the crew of six At the head of the ladder the Captain of the *Hellas* demanded to know what the outrage meant

"It means I must see your passenger-list," said John "I have reason to suppose a German is making an attempt to reach New York with a forged or stolen American passport. I'm sorry I had to fire, but you should have stopped when I told you "

"But Commander Barlow at the Piræus "

"Commander Barlow is under the orders of the British Control Bureau," John interrupted sharply. "I hope you're not going to make difficulties, Captain If you refuse to give up this passenger I shall order you in to Port Hiero which will mean a serious delay for you "

The Captain had no desire to go to Port Hiero. He decided to produce the passenger-list

"This is the man I want—Evangelos Velotas "

Stewards were bidden to search for him and within five minutes what looked like a typical swarthy American-Greek presented himself for inspection John's heart sank This could not be Heinrich Wahl He turned to Petro Dondas, and to his great relief the barber nodded

"Evangelos Velotas, send a steward for your hand-baggage You have to accompany us to the British Control Bureau's yacht "

"Captain, I appeal to you. This is an outrage. I am an American citizen Here is my passport The visa is in order I hold you responsible I appeal to the American Consul at Mytilene. This is an outrage . . an outrage on an American citizen "

The Captain was obviously uncomfortable. John was

praying that Petro had not made a mistake. He looked across at him again, and again the barber nodded.

"If you can satisfy me that you are who you claim to be, Mr Velotas, I will put back into Mytilene with you and you can rejoin the *Hellas* there. But I strongly advise you to take your hand-baggage with you in case you don't satisfy me."

"I refuse to go."

"Mr Velotas, do not compel me to use force."

"You'd better go, Mr Velotas," the Captain urged. "I am anxious to proceed to Mytilene as quickly as I can."

"Get my baggage," said the alleged Velotas sullenly. As he turned to speak to the stewards John signed to Iredale and Yarrow who stepped across and felt him over for arms. They did not find a pistol.

The stewards came back in a few minutes with a couple of valises strapped up.

"If you have any heavy baggage in the hold, Mr Velotas," John said, "I advise you to . . ."

"I have no heavy baggage."

Velotas did not speak while they were rowing back to the yacht. The elephant moved on majestically north. The fox-terrier wagged its tail or in other words the *Argo* dipped her ensign in salute and proceeded southward toward Chios.

"And who do you think I am?" the prisoner asked, when he was sitting in the saloon. "This is going to cause you some trouble."

"I don't fancy so, though it may cause Miss Grace Harper some trouble to explain how she managed to hide you in Salonica last September."

It was merely a guess, but it went home. For one brief instant Heinrich Wahl could not hide his surprise. He had been on guard against being addressed by his own name, but the mention of Grace Harper passed it.

"And tell me," John added, "I hope the steward did not forget to pack your hair-dye "

No papers were found on him. He was sent to Malta in the *Whinchat* a few days later, being accommodated meanwhile in the old German Consulate in Lipsia. They tried to make him at home in the yacht for the rest of the voyage, but he was a disagreeable passenger.

At Chios they found as S N O Lieutenant-Commander Micklethwaite with one of the small monitors. Micklethwaite was a solemn and pragmatistical fellow whom pink gins rendered more solemn and more pragmatistical. As a fundamentalist in Tennessee meets the shocks of science by clinging to the verbal inspiration of the Bible so Micklethwaite had met the shocks of war by clinging to a strictly literal interpretation of the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions. When John reported to him the stopping of the *Hellas* he was shocked.

"That's where you temporary sailors always let the Navy down. You don't know the King's Regulations. You can't stop a vessel flying a neutral flag with a yacht flying the Blue Ensign "

"But I did," John pointed out.

"Have you an Admiralty Warrant to fly the Blue Ensign ?"

"No "

"Have you an Admiralty Warrant to add the initials B C B in red to the Blue Ensign ?"

"No "

"Then you cannot stop a neutral vessel," Micklethwaite repeated.

"But I did," John pointed out again.

"You cannot mount a gun "

"But the Admiral gave us a gun "

Micklethwaite shook his head gloomily.

"There you are, you see That's what we are up against The whole of the squadron is going to pieces because we allow the war to interfere with Regulations. And we shall pay for it You mark my words, Ogilvie We shall pay for it. We may win the war in spite of violating Regulations But the Navy won't be what it was And what's the good of winning the war if when we've won it the Navy isn't what it was? Take this business of gaiters, for instance King's Regulations prescribe what is to be worn by officers, warrant officers, and men of the Royal Navy for landing parties ashore If I go for a walk in time of war I'm a landing party ashore. Every afternoon at three o'clock I take a walk Will you ever see me taking that walk without gaiters? I may have been passed over, I may complain that instead of commanding a small monitor in Chios I should be commanding a flotilla-leader with the Grand Fleet But that's not going to make me omit to wear gaiters with the dress for which in King's Regulations gaiters are laid down My ship may be an almost unmanageable oil-tank brought out here to bombard the enemy's positions at Gallipoli and not worth sending home now its utility in these waters has expired, but you won't find another ship in the Aegean in which officers, warrant officers and men keep the spirit and letter of King's Regulations as strictly as we do Well, here's the signal I am sending to the Vice-Admiral You'll see, Ogilvie, I've had to take a strong line"

John picked up the piece of paper and read

At 5.25 a.m. off gulf of Chandarli S.Y. Argo attached to British Control Bureau Lipsia stopped Panathenaic S.S. Hellas and took off alleged German agent Heinrich Wahl Prisoner being conveyed to Lipsia Submit action serious breach of King's Regulations and request instructions. Am detaining Argo meanwhile.

"That's quite clear," said John encouragingly.

"And you understand of course," Micklethwaite added, "that *Argo* is now under arrest until I receive instructions from the Vice-Admiral "

"But I'm anxious to get on to Samos this afternoon I haven't much business to do with Burrows, our port-control man here "

"I'm sorry, Ogilvie, but you cannot proceed to Samos until I have received instructions from the Vice-Admiral Michael, bring two more pink gins You're lunching with me, of course"

John would have preferred to get on with his work, but as lunch had to be eaten somewhere and as it was now close on one o'clock he stuck to his rule of always being tactful with the Navy and ate with Micklethwaite a somewhat ceremonious lunch on board *M102*, in the course of which he was given many a story to illustrate the immense moral invigoration to be gained from a careful study of King's Regulations, and a refusal to allow a state of war to divert the individual from his duty to obey them as implicitly as he would in time of peace

However, John was able to escape from Micklethwaite's company ashore by getting away about two o'clock, and he was glad he had when on his way to the port-control office he found himself walking along the quay through numbers of starving refugees. Hands plucked at his sleeve as he passed, hands imponderable as the touch of skeleton leaves, the hands of ghosts Children with hollow eyes pointed bony fingers at their mouths. Emaciated women sat huddled against the warehouse walls, with children sucking at breasts as dry as husks. Men lay prostrate on the paving-stones, seeking from sleep a substitute for food Across the blue water scarcely ten miles away rose Asia, which had been their home before the cruelty of war had driven them forth to starve The sight of such human misery was almost unbearable even alone: in the company of Micklethwaite talking

about the importance of wearing gaiters when ashore it would have been utterly unbearable. The offer of alms could usually alleviate the ache of compassion, but the inability now to give to all made the giving of alms to a few an aggravation of his own distress.

"Can nothing be done to feed these unfortunate creatures properly?" he asked Burrows, a pleasant youth from Smyrna who was waiting eagerly to be complimented on his port-control organization. Being used to the sight of these refugees by now he noticed them no more than a drift of dead leaves along a gutter.

"They are fed twice a week, sir."

"But can no employment be found for them here?" John asked, looking across the flat-roofed houses and orange-groves of the town to the reddish-brown naked precipices of the hills westward furrowed and riven by earthquake.

"I'm afraid not, sir. The refugee problem is very acute both here and in Mytilene."

The misery that the Turks had brought since they came riding out of the heart of Asia a thousand years ago! Here in Chios not a century since they had slaughtered or sold into slavery almost every man, woman, and child on the island. Forty thousand massacred. Death and destruction. That was what the Turk had given the world. Death and destruction. Nothing else. And these refugees by the water of the harbour like ghosts beside the Stygian stream, like ghosts of the Christians of Asia Minor persecuted for a thousand years.

"Do you think my arrangement for stamping every permit for caiques in the top right-hand corner and requiring the holder to show that it has been duly stamped in the bottom left-hand corner by the port-control office at the port he has given as his destination is a good arrangement, sir? That enables me to affix a third stamp when the holder of the permit returns to Chios and

should he at any time want another permit he doesn't get it unless he can show me that his previous permit is in order "

"It sounds foolproof," John yawned "But, Burrows, I hope you won't think you have been stationed in Chios to indulge in stamping for stamping's sake It is more important, you know, that an honest man should make his voyage safely with a full cargo and a stamp in the wrong corner than that a dishonest man should flourish with the help of correctly placed stamps

"Quite, sir," Burrows assented, slightly perplexed, however, by John's moral proposition.

"Rules, you know, are made to be broken "

"I'm afraid I don't quite follow you, sir "

"What I mean is that all these elaborate rules about passports and permits are made in order that if necessary we can use them They become contemptible pedantry whenever an honest man is sacrificed to them. The officers of the B C B. I most esteem are those who are not afraid to make exceptions. If ever you seek to protect yourself against a piece of folly by pleading you were acting according to rule, I'm afraid you'll find me extremely unsympathetic, even harsh How old are you?"

"Twenty-three, sir "

"Well, thank God for giving you an island like Chios to play about in instead of watching for death by the Struma or the Somme "

"I hoped you'd approve of my system of port-control here, sir," said Burrows despondently

"I've not expressed a sign of disapproval. All I'm asking you to do is to be anxious to assume responsibility and employ initiative. You'll hear quickly enough from me when you've assumed or employed either unjustifiably Do you know which of the B C B officers has made the best job of his island? Hinks Hinks was employed in a London bank before he came out here. Since he has been

in charge of his island he has sent me two telegrams. You came to Chios a month later, and you've already sent me over sixty, though Chios is a much easier island to look after than Hinks's island "

"Well, sir, in justice to myself I must explain that the S.N O here is sometimes rather sticky "

"Oh yes, I realize that, and Hinks has no S N O right on top of him All the same, try not to worry us in Lipsia with unnecessary questions I can see that you have your show running admirably If you have trouble with Commander Micklethwaite you can count on my support And do try to stir up the local authorities to do something more for those refugees."

"I didn't understand the refugees came within the scope of my job, sir "

"Of course they do, Burrows Go and see the Governor this afternoon If I don't get a signal for permission to proceed to Samos I'll call on him myself But I expect to be moving on. Make my excuses for not calling and explain that I had no time "

After this interview with Burrows John met Micklethwaite taking his constitutional The gaiters were in place.

"Any message from the Admiral?" he asked

"Yes, he says I'm to take no action So you can proceed to Samos."

"That's good I'll get away at once. I say, these refugees are a bad business "

"Disgraceful," Micklethwaite agreed warmly "I've made four complaints to the Greek authorities about their being allowed to hang about round the harbour But these Greeks! Hopeless! To-morrow, to-morrow. Everything's to-morrow Of course, you know the great mistake we made in this war?"

"I know so many that it's rather difficult to award the prize "

"The great mistake we made was being on the wrong

side. Fancy expecting the Navy to fight a war on the same side as the French and the Italians. It's not natural."

"But it's not actually contrary to anything laid down in King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions?" John asked.

"I'm serious, Ogilvie. We weren't intended to fight against the Germans and the Austrians."

"What went wrong?"

"These bloody politicians, I suppose."

"I expect so. Well, so long. I've told young Burrows to work in close co-operation with you."

"Ah, I'm glad you did. That young man is a little inclined to take the bit between his teeth."

"I confess that hadn't struck me," said John.

"But he's getting more used to Service ways now. Well, we'll be seeing you again, I expect. By the way, keep to starboard as you come down the narrows past Cheshme. The Turks have a gun on the point. I don't suppose they'd hit you at a thousand yards. But you know what I mean?"

"Yes, I think I know what you mean. Well, so long."

"I'll signal S N O Samos to expect you after sunset."

"Wouldn't it be wiser to say nothing?" John suggested.

"I don't want a U-boat to be waiting for us off Vathy."

"I can't help that, Ogilvie. You'll be entering another area. Rawlinson would be furious if you entered his area without notification."

"All right," said John. He had decided to omit Samos and proceed direct to Icaros. It was easier to do that than spend his time on the quay arguing with Micklethwaite about the folly of broadcasting all over the Aegean the movements of a vessel employed on Intelligence work, to spend his time arguing while these ghostly hands plucked at his sleeve for charity and these hollow-eyed half-naked children, whose ribs seemed as if they must burst through the grey web of skin, pointed to their empty mouths.

"For God's sake, Micklethwaite, try to do something to get these children fed," John implored, and hurried away from the agonizing spectacle.

Thinking about those children he forgot to warn Pneumatikos to keep well to starboard in the narrows past Cheshme, and the first reminder he had was an exultant shout from Mervyn Iredale that they were being fired at. There was no need to say anything to Pneumatikos. He was making a bee-line toward the Chios shore. A couple of fountains spouted at least a mile astern.

"I say, sir, can't we return their fire?" wailed Iredale.

"We'd be only about three miles short," John replied.

"Not if the Captain takes the yacht in toward the mainland."

"Yes, I see Pneumatikos doing that," John laughed. "We'll be lucky if he doesn't run us ashore on Chios."

So Iredale's hope of a duel with a land battery was dashed.

It was half-past ten before they were hooting outside the boom that guarded the harbour of Chora in Icaros, but John knowing Trehawke's fondness for sitting up and yarning was rowed over to the *Snapdragon*.

"Oh, good work, you're back," the voice of her Captain came ringing over the water. John could see his hefty shape in the starshine leaning over the rail.

"I guessed that was probably you hooting outside the boom. Come aboard and give us all the latest scandal. What's it to be?" he asked when John was sitting in his cabin.

"Have you got any ginger-beer?"

"Ginger-beer?" Trehawke echoed in dismay.

"With gin in it."

"I'll tell you what you want. A horse's neck. My boy, I'll mix you a horse's neck like a Derby winner's."

He poured out the ginger-ale and brandy and peeled

the lemon with a flourish to hang it on the rim of the tumbler

"Where do you come from?"

"Chios "

"Old Mucky Micklethwaite? Here, drink that down. And I'll mix you another Poor old Mucky, eh? He and I were in the *Britannia* together He was another bit of wreckage they picked off the beach when war broke out The bloodiest old fool that ever saluted the quarter-deck, but not a bad egg once you've cracked his shell. You know that R N R lieutenant of mine, Barker?"

"Yes, awfully good fellow "

"A good lad, yes Well, the other day he said to me, 'You know what we say in the Royal Naval Reserve, sir? R N R.? Sailors but not gentlemen R N V R.? Gentlemen but not sailors R N.? B——r all!' He was with poor old Mucky before he came to me And what did Buzfuz want?"

John related the tale of the bath and the breakfast and the air-raid on the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* to the accompaniment of thunderous laughter from Trehawke.

"If you go on laughing the good people of Icaros will think there's a Zeppelin bombarding us "

"Kicked his sock in the bath? Oh, why wasn't I there? I lay his countenance was the colour of a monkey's —— "

"By the way, you might let S N O Samos know we came straight on here Micklethwaite insisted on telling him we were going to Vathy "

"He would But Rawlinson will be all right He's a sensible fellow. Why don't you persuade Captain Lambourne to fit you out with wireless? You really ought to have it "

"I did ask him, but he gave a firm refusal Suggested we might carry pigeons "

"Well, you can eat pigeons, but you can't eat wireless.

Still, joking apart, it wouldn't be a bad notion to take pigeons with you. Why don't you write up to Signals, Salonica, for some birds?"

"I'm sending Yarrow up there in the *Whinchat*. He can bring them back," said John, grinning at the thought of the long face Yarrow would pull at the notion of having to look after a basket of pigeons.

The next morning when John went ashore to discuss with Joe Hoggart the getting out of the information from the new agents they were proposing to send into Constantinople, he was greeted at the Consulate with the news that Emil had received orders to proceed to the Legation in Stockholm. He was evidently overjoyed at the prospect.

"For goodness sake don't get mixed up with those revolutionaries," John said.

"I shall know there what's going on," was all that Emil replied, but his eyes were brilliant with excitement.

John told him about the new agents.

"Twenty-six was one of Lingfield's men," said Emil. "I've always heard he was good. It's obvious that those flying-chaps never planted a single bomb on either of the ships. Still, you can't deal with the impenetrable stupidity of the Navy. I doubt if Yarrow will find any people up at Salonica now. It's a mad scheme."

"Still, I must try it," said John. "But what I want is that address in Pera."

"I'm not going to let them have that," Emil snapped quickly.

"But look here, I don't want to compromise Twenty-six by putting these new fellows in touch with him. Surely they can use Fourteen's letter-box in Pera? Then the stuff can be posted to the letter-box you use in Panderma, Panderma can post it on to Peterman in Mileto, and P. can get it to Joe Hoggart in the usual way."

"P's frightened," Emil said "I half promised him a holiday "

"Well, just once more It's vital for me to keep Twenty-six safe and when the V A finds his stuff confirmed by these new fellows he'll shut up fussing "

"P was engaged to work for me," Emil objected. "If he knows I've left Icaros he won't do any more."

"That's why I want you to help "

"Yes, but I'm not prepared to let P down "

"Joe and I won't let him down," John argued.

But Emil still hesitated

"If anything happened to him I'd feel I was to blame. Rewfiz is getting nervous too Enver's gang are watching for his first slip You knew there was a question last year of his being bribed to hand over Mileto to us?"

"No, I didn't know that "

"I talked the matter over with him."

"Good lord, where?"

"In Mileto "

"You went into Mileto?"

"Yes, I was empowered to offer him two million pounds, but he wanted three. And then the soldiers changed their minds, and didn't think they could do anything with Mileto after all "

"You went into Mileto?" John repeated in amazement

"It was perfectly simple I travelled by night *en turque*, and Rewfiz made arrangements to get the sentries out of the way at the point I entered the town "

"You really are an extraordinary chap "

"Not at all, I tell you it was perfectly simple Rewfiz was scared, though He implored me to be sure and keep Afid Bey and Kawal Bey safe in Malta, because if as a friend of the Entente he found himself in trouble with Enver and the rest we could help him by threatening reprisals against them "

"They were those two Turks we captured at the end of '14?"

"Yes Both great friends of Enver's However, I had to tell poor Rewfiz that if he was counting on a threat of reprisals to save him he was counting on nothing "

"Well, I must say you've successfully staggered me with that story of going into Mileto But do help us over these agents like a good man. After all, P has been quiet for some time It merely means finding a messenger for the coast and another messenger to Joe to say when we may expect him "

So finally Emil gave John the address in Pera and agreed to let Peterman know that a letter coming from Panderma must reach Joe Hoggart as soon as possible

"We won't let him down," said John confidently

"I hope you won't But I tell you this, John I wouldn't have agreed to do this if the *Samaena* had been interfered with "

"Who's taking your place here?"

"Withers. He's to be Acting Vice-Consul "

"Oh, I'm so glad," John said, and he hurried over to the clerk's room to congratulate him

"Well, they say the unexpected always happens," Withers observed. "But by and large this wasn't quite so unexpected, because the girl who told my future up at Sosanna's the other night said I'd have my wish within a week "

"And were you wishing to be an Acting Vice-Consul?"

"No, because it never entered my head there was any chance of me being made an Acting Vice-Consul, but if I'd thought there was I would have wished it So it comes to the same thing Yes, you'll hear people laugh over fortune-telling with cards, but there's a lot more in it than what some people think Well, that was a lucky trip for me, Commander. After all I might just as easily been torpedoed as been made an Acting Vice-Consul."

It was decided that *Argo* should not leave Icaros until after dusk, for two reports of a submarine's being sighted in the waters between Icaros and Lipsia had been received by *Snaptadragon*.

So John went for a long walk with Emil, and listened to him discoursing about the future of Russia and the effect on Europe of what was happening there. Yet in this lucid air of Greece his mind refused to concentrate on the cloudy immensities of his friend's vision. Here haunted by the past and living intensely in the present he could not think about the future, or at any rate beyond that future in which he and Zoe would be married. Should he see her to-morrow? There would be a fortnight's arrears of correspondence to deal with at the Bureau. He should hardly have a chance to see her to-morrow. And the next day the *Whinchat* would be due, and he should have to give Yarrow and Stavro final instructions, but in the afternoon he might arrange with Philia that they would pay a call on Mrs Strouzas.

"In Lenin they have a genuine opportunist," Emil was saying. "I have great hopes."

"Well, for heaven's sake don't get yourself involved in any revolutionary business up in Stockholm. Emil, what would you say if I told you I hoped to be married before this year is out?"

"To whom?"

"To a Greek girl. She's in Lipsia now."

They had reached the solitary column that was left standing of the Temple of Artemis which had once dominated the valley up which they were walking. Leaning against the sun-warmed marble John saw Zoe coming towards him, dressed in the saffron of one of the goddess's maiden worshippers. It was a vision which passed within the blink of an eye, but so vivid that he gazed across the valley for her vanished form.

"Are you serious, John?"

"Absolutely "

"I hope marriage will bring you happiness. Strange that you should think of settling down when the war is over and that I long for the end of the war to start living. What's her name?"

"Zoe Gadrilakis "

"Life! Oh well, it's an appropriate name if you believe that a woman can give you life "

"You may find a woman yet who will give you life "

Emil shook his head.

"Women as women do not interest me. When I see people absorbed in women it has the same effect on me as people absorbed in birds or cats. I cannot imagine being absorbed in something with whom there can only be incomplete communication. And sexual relationship with a woman is as much beyond my fancy as finding any kind of emotional gratification in the feathers of birds or the fur of cats."

"You're an inhuman creature "

"It's such a sterile amusement, and aesthetically odious. Of course I do not want to have children "

"Not even to enjoy a Marxian world?"

"I'm not such a visionary as to suppose that a Marxian world can be achieved in time for any child of mine to enjoy it. No, I prefer not to dissipate my energy. You don't appreciate what the possibilities are in this Russian business. Oh, why aren't I there?"

"I wonder whether you'll like the cold North after this?"

"There is a flame to warm the mind there now. This warmth of Greece merely warms the body. It is as trifling as love for a woman. . for me," he added quickly. "Don't think I'm dogmatizing for the whole of humanity."

"Oh well," said John, "falling in love has made all the

difference to me I was beginning to wither last year at Salonica The futility of it all was strangling me."

"The work you're doing now is equally futile"

"Yes, but it possesses a comparatively clean futility. And, though you will call it mere romantic drug-taking, I *am* living the life that men have lived in this sea since Minoan days The Harpies swooped down on Trehawke's coffee last week Scylla has become a submarine, but the old perils are there in new shapes, and when the perils are overcome Andromeda or Ariadne waits Against this column must have leaned many a human being who thought of love in the same terms as I think of it I'll grant that the war is a horror where it has kept pace with the imagined progress of the world But the particular corner of this war that holds me is the same kind of war that Achilles fought, and Hector and Diomed and Odysseus Oh, well, the plain truth of it is, Emil, I'm in love, and fortune has granted me love at a moment when I can savour it to its utmost exquisite enchantment"

"And you are not afraid the gods will be jealous? Surely that fear should enter into the atmosphere you have created for yourself?"

"But I have created no atmosphere It is this atmosphere which has created me"

"And so you felt you had to fall in love with a girl, eh?" Emil pressed

"Oh no, I fell in love with her when that December nightmare in Athens came to an end And I shall remind you, Emil, that you have not been immune from this atmosphere For two and a half years now you have surrendered to it. Can you imagine yourself leading cattle-raids elsewhere? Can you imagine your pride in and devotion to that old motor-boat elsewhere? It is only since you heard the news from Russia that you have despised this ancient part of the world Imagine what I must have felt last May in Salonica when I was hearing about the executions

in Ireland No, I offer to the jealous gods the year 1916, and they will not grudge me this happier 1917. Besides, there are certain complications to be unravelled before Zoe and I can be married, or even formally engaged "

Then Emil started to discourse again of what might be the result of the Russian revolution, and listening to him John was vaguely aware of countless numbers of people like those exiles in Citrano all talking at once while he leaned back against that sun-warmed column seeking to conjure once more the vision of Zoe in saffron coming up the valley to the temple of the Divine Huntress

Nisyros, Rhodes, Symi, Cos, Calymnos, Leros, Patmos, Prasino, Icaros, Lemnos, Lesbos, Chios and Lipsia in the rose of an April dawn . and Zoe.

It was decided that Yarrow should not notify the military authorities at Salonica of his mission He was to stay inconspicuously in the house of one of their friends there and be ready to step forward to protect Stavro Priphtes should he find himself involved with Skinner or Wicksteed Stavro was to look around for suitable people, and it would be he who would give them instructions

The highlander had made a complete recovery from his wound, and was obviously pleased at being given a more interesting job than the superintendence of the coast-watchers on the south and west of Lipsia, which was what he had been doing since he was up and about again The pleasure was not eloquently expressed, for Stavro's natural taciturnity had been if anything increased since the death of Lingfield, but he twirled his great black moustaches a good deal, and that was always a sign of his interest Agent Number Twenty-six had been one of his own discoveries, which added to his anxiety to have him proved accurate

"The sooner you can get these men in the better,"

John said "But don't hurry over your choice. It's better to have accurate information a fortnight late than inaccurate information a fortnight earlier I warned the Admiral he couldn't expect any results before the beginning of June at the earliest If you use Bulgarians I suppose you'll want to land them in the Gulf of Enos?"

Stavro clicked his tongue and waggled a negative forefinger

"No good now. I shall find the way "

"And you'll see about those pigeons, James?"

"Are you serious about these preposterous birds?"

"Absolutely. Try to wangle half a dozen from Signals "

"It will be a fearful fag bringing them back," Yarrow said lugubriously

John agreed, but did not offer to relieve him of the burden

"Well, I think that's all clear. You can recruit up to four men, and they are to do nothing except obtain authentic news about the air-raid. They're not to touch anything else You have the address where the information is to be handed in, and that's all they have to do. I'll arrange with Mytilene and Chios about getting them off the mainland when you give me the alternative dates. I've already arranged with Joe Hoggart about getting the information out The *Whinchat* is leaving at noon. Good-bye, and good luck "

The *Whinchat* brought heavy bags from Malta and Athens and John was working till ten o'clock that night and all the next day to have his own bags for London, Athens, and Malta ready for the return journey of the *Whinchat* forty-eight hours later when Heinrich Wahl would be on board

April had passed before John was able to meet Zoe with a clear conscience. In the garden opposite the old Turkish Consulate the brilliant carmine of the Judas-tree

had deepened to a tangle of crimson roses And from the grey-walled garden beside the sea the lilac-blossom had vanished It also was a tangle of roses now

"Have you thought much about me?" she asked

"Did not that kiss tell you how much, *Zoe mou*?"

She sighed in a languor of happiness

"I have been so frightened you would be drowned So frightened, so frightened."

"Fortune was guarding us all the time," he declared "We were always too late or too soon for danger "

"But you will not go away again very soon?"

"Not more often than is absolutely necessary But you mustn't be frightened of the sea, *psyche mou*. I have been planning to visit all these islands with you when the war is over "

"I would like to be on land. We can go to nice places on land "

He caught her to him

"Zoe, that's the first time you've spoken about our life together in the future as an understood thing. Have you told Basil Roussos yet?"

"Only to tell him that I cannot ever marry him "

"But you'd already told him that many times even before we met."

"Yes, but now I have told him he must not kiss me ever again. And he is terribly sad I find it so difficult to make him suffer so much I'm afraid what he will do to himself "

"He will do nothing People who talk of killing themselves never do Naturally if you let him see that such talk affects you he will take advantage of it However, don't let's discuss problems to-day Wherever I have been on this voyage you were beside me In Icaros I had a vision of you in a valley dressed in saffron and coming to worship at the Temple of Artemis "

"But yellow does not suit me at all I would look so

ugly in a yellow dress. For Philia, yes, but for me, oh no, no "

"The vision lasted only a moment, but I thought you looked very beautiful "

They were sitting on the marble seat overhung now by prodigal sprays of roses. Roses and the sea .

roses roses and the sea . . roses her lips and her eyes the sea

"Too sweet, too sweet," she murmured in English, her voice as much a part of this summer air as the pervading hum of innumerable wings. "How can I to love somebody so much in a small time like this? Yes, yes, this is love," she added to herself in Greek as if the foreign language might be casting on the truth a spell from which she might awake in disillusionment.

She put up her arm to draw him yet closer . roses
roses roses roses her lips and her eyes
the sea .

"What does this mean, if you please?"

They broke from the embrace to see the pale countenance and pale-blue horrified eyes of Basil Roussos regarding them. He was hatless as usual, and two or three petals of roses were caught in his tight curly hair.

"It means that Zoe has promised to marry me," said John.

The young man stood regarding them in a daze. There were drops of sweat on his high forehead. Then suddenly he turned to upbraid Zoe. She had led him on to be making love with her to feed her vanity. She had been false as never would he have believed a girl could be false. She was cruel. She was heartless. If it gave her pleasure to know it she had ruined the whole prospect of his life. He could neither work nor sleep for thinking of her. She had made use of his devotion so long as it served her, and now when she no longer had any use for it she had trampled on him.

"It is not true, Vasili," she cried, and John was relieved to find that she was confronting him not with tears but with indignation "I have been always kind to you It was you who were always running after me"

"And you have not kissed me?" the young man sternly demanded

"No, you have kissed me, because when I would not let you kiss me you have cried But I have never kissed you It was kindness that I have not told you I shall be married It was to make you not love me if I could, and then I would have told you"

"So that is it," said the young man in a hollow voice. "You know what I have told you I would do?"

"If you must be so silly," she replied angrily, "you must do it If talking could make me love you I would have loved you madly But talking does not make love"

She turned from him to walk through the gate and make her way up the marble steps to the house In his effort to walk beside her Vasili found himself entangled with the rampant sprays of roses and his curly hair was covered with clinging petals

John walked behind He would invite this unfortunate young man to discuss the business with him, and perhaps after that he would understand how inevitable it had all been and how nothing he could have said or done could have stopped it.

In the garden at the head of the steps Philia was waiting for them

"Why did you send me down there?" Vasili demanded tragically

"Because, my dear boy, somebody had to do something to make you understand what Zoe had no courage to tell you"

"But does Mr Gadrilakis know about this?" he asked.

"He knows nothing at all He will know now That is why I sent you to find Zoe. I suppose I shall have no

thanks from you or from her, but I have been very wise "

"Vasili says that I have led him on Tell him, please, Philia, how wicked he is to say that "

"He is not wicked, he is stupid "

John thought it was time to intervene

"Come along, Vasili, and have a quiet talk with me. Let Zoe and Philia argue about you by themselves "

"But I think, if you please, Commander Ogilvie, I would rather not talk. I am in such a very nervous state "

"I know It's natural It has been a shock But, believe me, it's better to talk to me than to use up any more emotion in reproaching Zoe or Philia. We'll go round to my room at the Bureau Zoe, you'll tell your father I shall call on him before dinner, and that I'm hoping he will dine with me to-night "

Basil Roussos accompanied John unwillingly. For so long now he had been used to escorting Zoe home and wearing her down by his persistency that he was probably thinking he could persuade her in the course of the way back to change her mind about being married

The Bureau was empty except for Kellaway, who was wrestling with his files It was John's habit to keep the staff at work all night if there was work to be done, but when the work was over never to insist on set hours for the sake of set hours.

His own room did not look over the harbour, but into a white courtyard at the back of the old Austrian Consulate, where not a sound of the busy quayside life penetrated He sat down at his table and Basil Roussos sat on the other side of it. John had had many a difficult conversation across this table since he came to Lipsia, but this looked like being the most difficult of them all. He pushed a box of Samian cigarettes across

"No, thank you, Commander. I am too nervous to smoke."

"Well, I'm rather nervous too, but I find a pipe always helps me in such circumstances. Look here, Vasili, you don't mind my calling you Vasili?" The young man bowed ceremoniously. . . "I want you to understand that this is something final, something that can't be altered by argument or entreaty or anything. Certainly I have not yet asked Mr Gadrilakis' consent, but I feel sure it won't be withheld."

"I am sure of that too," said Vasili gloomily. "You have money. I have perhaps no money, because perhaps my father is ruined by the war."

"Yes, but don't let's bring money into it. You would have a right to feel bitter if Zoe were marrying me for any other reason except love. But before we can get anywhere in this talk you must face the fact that however rich you were it would not help you. You have had every opportunity to win her love. Until she met me there was nobody in your way. I fell in love with her at first sight that night you came aboard the *Margarita*. I told her in February that I loved her. It has been kept a secret solely out of consideration for you. She knew how much you were in love with her. . ."

"Indeed, yes," Vasili interjected bitterly.

"And she was afraid of the effect upon you of her engagement to me being announced. I agreed to wait until May to give her time to let you down gently. But perhaps it would have been kinder to tell you at once. I don't know. Anyhow, her delay was due certainly to kindness, and I agreed to it because, you see, loving her myself I could not help feeling sorry for you."

"I do not request your pity, if you please."

"Well, I'm afraid it's no good my trying to dislike you, Vasili, because I really couldn't dislike somebody with whom I must obviously have so much in common."

"Please?"

"Surely you don't think the worse of me for being in

love with Zoe? You must understand what I feel I've been more fortunate than you, but you're not so petty as to hate a man for that When I was younger than you I was in love with a girl who loved me, and she married somebody else of whom she was very fond as Zoe is now fond of you . but not in love He was an older man In this case the position is reversed. Zoe is in love with an older man "

"She imagines she is love," Vasilis insisted obstinately

"You know, that remark doesn't mean a great deal if you analyse it It can only mean she merely imagines she is not in love with you It's an ancient piece of masculine vanity for a man to fancy a woman must be in love with him because he is in love with her It is loving subjectively but not objectively. And that is the egotistical love which people give to animals or little girls to their dolls. People love animals and little girls love dolls because they belong to them And alas, hundreds of human beings love other human beings as possessions Think of the hundreds of men whose sexual intercourse is dictated entirely by their own gratification and who gain no added gratification from the response of the woman Why do you say that Zoe only imagines herself in love with me?"

"How can she have the experience of the world at her age to know that she is in love with a man perhaps twenty years older than herself?"

"Not twenty years Only sixteen years "

"It is enough, please "

"Arithmetically yes But age isn't a matter of arithmetic And Zoe required no experience of the world to fall in love with me Don't you believe in love at first sight?"

"I think it is very exaggerated And Zoe is not a girl to fall in love like that "

"Well, we shan't get anywhere in this talk," John said, "if you're going to argue that the rejected suitor knows

more about the girl who has rejected him than the successful suitor about the girl who has accepted him. You know a great deal about Zoe, but you only know the Zoe who does not love you through the Vasili who loves her. Has it struck you that if you loved her objectively you would be happy because she was happily in love?"

"It is very easy to talk so when you can make her yours. But you would not have been so happy if she had married me."

"Well, you know, Vasili, I don't believe in anything except mutual love. If loving me she had agreed to marry you because she was sorry for you I should have been unhappy because I shouldn't have believed she could achieve more than comparative happiness, but if she had not loved me I should have wanted her to marry the man she loved. There would have been no altruism in this. I don't think I could be in love with a woman who was not equally as much in love with me. I simply cannot understand a man wasting his time in what is called trying to win a woman's love. I regard it as unnatural. You can win a woman's affection, gratitude, respect, admiration, but you cannot ever win more than an imitation of love. I'll allow that if a woman marries a man she likes she can habituate herself to his passionate expression of it and perhaps even enjoy that passionate expression up to a point, but only if she has never loved. Once a woman knows what love is, she can never do more than tolerate the passionate expression of it by another man. From the moment Zoe knew she loved me no warmth of compassion for you would have allowed her to marry you in the idea that she would grow to love you. Be candid, Vasili. Have you ever deluded yourself that she loved you?"

"As far as a girl of her age could be loving she was loving me."

"Well, all I can put against that is a prophecy that one day you will meet a girl who loves you as much as you

love her, and then you'll remember this talk and admit I was right "

"You think I am falling in love so easily as that?"

"I said 'one day.' I wasn't expecting you to do it next week. You're twenty, aren't you?"

"Twenty-one, please," said Vasili stiffly. Once upon a time John's pride had been vexed by a similar mistake of a year.

"I loved a girl when I was eighteen. Since I loved that girl, though I had many emotional adventures, I did not fall in love as I have fallen in love with Zoe until now. And the year before last I met that girl again and was glad I had not married her. I'll admit it's not a fair view to take of one's youth, because after all two people who have been growing steadily apart for ten years might have been different people if fate had allowed them to grow steadily closer to each other all those years. But time does play its part. I'm not going to enrage you now by assuring you that the ache you now feel for a lost Zoe will vanish. In any case, it's no use to tell a man with toothache that it won't be aching a year hence. All pain whether it be mental or physical seems eternal while we are suffering. That's a characteristic of pain which is usually denied to pleasure. But let's leave the theory of the business out of it and come down to facts. You have got to face the fact that Zoe and I will be married. You feel at this moment that you cannot face that fact. Are you going to surrender to the self-indulgence of youth or are you going to face that fact and turn it to account in building up your own character? You'll have to decide that for yourself. But if you set out to deal with the crisis by denying reality to others and crediting yourself with the only reality you'll just be taking the road along which walks the madman, for that is madness. I know that you have frightened Zoe by talk about suicide. Well, if you decide that the only way in which you can prove your reality to others is by

destroying your body you'll do it I'll be brutal and tell you that if you choose that way out I shall have a complete contempt for you, for I shall know that the reason which actuated you was a desire to spoil Zoe's life because you had failed to get that life into your own keeping "

"I perceive that you have discussed me with Miss Gadrilakis," observed Vasili, with a pathetic dignity

"Of course Zoe and I talked about you I told you that out of tenderness for you we agreed to keep it all a secret until she had had time to let you down as lightly as possible Philia who is wiser than the lot of us precipitated matters this afternoon When I leave you I am going to ask Mr Gadrilakis for Zoe Unless he refuses, you will have to face the fact of our engagement to-night "

The young man got up stiffly His pale-blue eyes were glowing with an heroic resolve And to his curly hair still clung a solitary rose-petal

"Commander, I offer you my felicitation. I withdraw what I have said to Miss Gadrilakis "

"Oh, please, Vasili, won't you call her Zoe?"

"I have your permission, yes?"

Two tears welled up in those pale-blue eyes, and rolled down those pale cheeks

"What permission would I be giving you, you foolish fellow?" said John, putting an arm round Vasili's shoulders. "I'm sorry my good fortune has brought you unhappiness, but I'm glad you're such a splendid chap, because after all we both do love the same girl and that girl is very fond of you, and I know it has been a great thing to have your friendship. So you see, I want you to be friends with me "

"I am proud And now please excuse me I wish to inform Helena of the finality of this "

"Good-bye, Vasili You won't mind my telling Zoe about this talk? I mean just the end of it?"

"Please. I have nothing to say."

He walked out of the room and as he brushed away what was probably an insistent tear the solitary rose-petal was detached from his curly straw-coloured hair and fluttered down upon the floor

Next day John wrote to Mr Justice Ogilvie

BRITISH CONTROL BUREAU
LIPSIA

May 2nd 1917.

My dear Father,

This is to let you know that I am engaged to be married, and that I hope to be married early this autumn. The girl's name is Zoe Gadrilakis. She is Greek, eighteen years old, the daughter of Nicolas Gadrilakis who is a rich shipowner, a refugee at present on this island from the anti-Venizelism of Athens. I saw her father yesterday and formally asked for her hand. He has been a friend of mine for some time and was most agreeably glad to give his consent. On top of that he insists on a dowry of £20,000 which is certainly handsome.

I shan't worry you with rhapsodies, but I am deeply in love and very happy.

Your affectionate son
J P O

Sir Alexander Ogilvie put down his son's letter. He was thinking of that stormy April sunset of battered cloud in the year 1881 when he and John's mother had walked home across the moors to Pendarves House, and of the sudden stillness that had come upon them out of the wind among the rhododendrons. A blackbird had flown shrilling across the mazy path through the tangled shrubbery, and Athene had clutched his arm in affright, and a moment later he had folded her to his heart. Athene's father had understood. When they came into his study where he was reading some ragged calf-bound tome in the small

circle of light cast by his green-shaded lamp, he had dropped the volume, and leaning back in the dimness beyond his lamp he had murmured, 'So you are going to take her away from me, Ogilvie?' And Athene had run forward and kissed him and cried, 'Oh, darling, I'm afraid he must.' And the old man . . . old man? Why, he himself was now at least five years older than John Pendarves had been then . . . It was incredible . . .

John wrote to Lady Ogilvie at the same time as to his father

My dearest Elise,

I am going to marry the most enchanting little creature. I've given the cold and matter-of-fact details to the Judge and spared him rhapsodies. Zoe, coppery hair, sea-blue eyes, roseleaf complexion, a miniature ocean-nymph eighteen years old with a delicious dark-tressed sister of fifteen called Phila. The engagement was announced at dinner to-night. We dined at one of the cafés in the Square. Have I described the Square? White marble which looks like snow under the moon. Not to-night's young May moon which had set before we sat down to dinner on the marble terrace above the Square, for we dine very late in Lipsia in summer. Actually it was ten o'clock when we sat down. I had all my people except dear James Yarrow who is up on business in Salonica, and I telephoned out to Grazia for Theodore Ladas and his two daughters. All three came, and the girls finding I was serious were charming to Zoe. We drank lots of champagne and had the Lipsia Dance Orchestra to play luscious folk tunes of the Levant and pre-war musical comedy numbers. Tell Prudence that she'll love Zoe, who's really very little older than herself! I'm incredibly happy.

When the celebration was over and I'd retired to bed under the benevolent eyes of Byron, Tpsilanti, Mavrocordato, and Miaoulis, I was roused by an appeal from the owner of the café to ask if I would go down to the Square and deal with a Japanese officer who was having a champagne celebration of his own and hitting the waiter on the head with the bottles unless he consented to drink with him glass for glass. He had drunk six bottles up to date (3 a m) and showed no signs of ever stopping. So I dressed and drove down to the deserted Square where I found the Japanese officer sitting at a large table covered with champagne bottles right in the middle of the Square. He was at one end of the table and the waiter had been made to sit at the other end. Just as I arrived he had leant over and caught the wretched man a whopper of a crack on the head. 'Oh, thank god, you've come, Commander, I cannot drink any more,' the waiter blubbered. I had to drink a bottle with the Japanese myself and explained to him that if I had known he was in Lipsia I would have invited him to my dinner. He wished me 'banzai' or whatever it is and agreed to go to bed. He was a dear little chap. His destroyer had been sunk by a submarine somewhere off Malta and he was making his way slowly back to Japan via Lipsia where he arrived to-night in a destroyer. I think he was meant to go to Mudros, but he'd wandered off ashore. Queer end-up to my evening.

Oh, dearest Elise, I am so wildly happy.

Your devoted

John

"This is great news, Alec," Elise Ogilvie said to her husband.

"Yes, he seems to have chosen wisely," the Judge replied. "A little young perhaps, but Athene was only twenty when I married her. And the girl has money."

"He says nothing about money in his letter to me I suppose he wrote to you in a more practical strain "

"Yes, I suppose he thought I wouldn't remember " the Judge broke off with a sigh, as he and Elise exchanged the letters they had received

Prudence, who was now close to her fourteenth birthday, was still in the stage of being neither girl nor boy, but in the first faint softening of her outlines and in the transient play of light and shade in her speedwell-blue eyes womanhood was imaginable as when the sallow-buds empearl the cold bare hedgerows of winter with the earliest pledge of spring

"Mummy, she's only four years older than me Do you think I'll be married in four years?"

"Zoe is probably older for her age than you are Greek girls grow up more quickly than English girls "

"Why do they?"

"Prudence dearest, that is one of your unanswerable questions "

"I wonder when we'll see her "

"I should think if the war is still going on this autumn John would be able to bring her to London when he next has leave "

"I should think she'd be nice, wouldn't you?" Prudence asked eagerly.

"I'm sure she'll be charming," her mother replied

"I'm awfully excited Anyway I'll be a sister-in-law, and perhaps I'll be an aunt "

To Miriam Stern John wrote:

My dearest Miriam,

The marriage is not yet accomplished, but the engagement was announced last night. I am supremely happy

I have just been for a voyage round the islands, and saw Emil in Icaros. You've probably heard by now that

he has been transferred to Stockholm He's delighted on account of this Russian business I do hope he won't let himself get mixed up in it before he's finished with his Consular career It's as well he's moving from Icaros because he was having rows with the Navy, and he would have had to come under me for Intelligence work if he had kept on with it. And I can assure you that did not please his Lordship one little bit But he was fretting at being so far away from news of what is happening in Russia And I'm glad he has managed this shift I expect you'll see him before he goes to Sweden Do implore him to keep out of any dangerous activity But I know you will Not that anything you or I say can do much good I told him about Zoe. He received the news rather as if I'd told him I was going in for keeping a canary But I'm too much in love to be daunted by anybody

The young man who was the difficulty has behaved very well I felt so pompous and absurd to be condoling with him when I knew he was regarding me as an obscene old man What a ridiculous business life is! Send me your blessing I hope to be married in September, war or no war

*Dearest love to you,
Always
John*

Miriam Stern looked out at the blue May sky between the grey houses of Claremount Gardens She was glad that John had chosen a girl to be his wife. The choice did not threaten their friendship as the choice of an older woman might have threatened it. 'Little would have remained of that if he had married Gabrielle Derozier, little enough, for all that my skin is beginning to show as many fine cracks of age as ivory' Frenchwomen never allowed for exceptions. For them the code of love was as rigorous as

a written constitution *'And it would have been hard to lose at fifty-four what I have kept so long'*

John had found the interview with his future father-in-law as easy as the interview at which the charter of the yacht was arranged. Nicolas Gadrilakis was a shrewd man. He knew that John was a successful dramatist, that his father was a judge, and that he had a small income of his own. What had impressed him more than that was the evidence of John's practical ability in the way his control of the Cyclades was working. The man who could carry that through in the way he had was not likely to make a failure of his life when the war was over. He was fond of his elder daughter, and if she had shown herself determined to marry the son of his old friend he would not have opposed the marriage, but her dowry would have been much smaller than it would be now. That she should have fallen in love with this eligible young Englishman gratified him extremely. She was her father's daughter. That's what it amounted to. She had known how to make her heart and head pull together. There had been a time when he had feared that Zoe was all heart and Philia all head.

Nicolas Gadrilakis was always a genial little man, but the engagement of his elder daughter to John Ogilvie made him glow with geniality. On the night after that jolly dinner at the Square he had gone up to the club, prepared to lose fifty thousand drachmas at *chemin-de-fer* to his rich fellow-refugees and the Lipsiote men of substance. It would be a pleasure to lose in such pleasant circumstances.

However, in spite of his genial intentions Nicolas Gadrilakis did not lose. On the contrary he came home that night the richer by sixty-five thousand drachmas, and finding no other way of being genial he decided to add

fifty thousand drachmas to Zoe's dowry and presented his wife with the odd fifteen thousand to buy herself a souvenir of the occasion

Madame Gadrilakis was not displeased by the engagement, although a little taken aback by the surprise of it. It occurred to her that if her daughter could establish an intimacy with this Englishman without her having an inkling of what was going on she had fresh cause to suspect her husband's fidelity. If Zoe could deceive her, Nicolas was equally capable of doing so. The first gratification of that present turned to suspicion. She had never heard of Virgil's line about fearing the Greeks when they bring gifts, but she would certainly have considered it applicable to Greek husbands. She made up her mind to institute new enquiries about the whereabouts of Nicolas when he was supposed to be gambling at the club. Meanwhile, she felt it was her duty to forewarn Zoe what marriage might mean unless she forearmed herself with a scepticism about the nature of the male

"I wish we knew a little more about the private life of your future husband," she said to Zoe

"Surely, mamma, that is pappà's business," Philia protested. "If pappà is satisfied, why must you worry yourself about John's private life?"

Madame Gadrilakis stamped her foot.

"I will not endure your insolence, Philia," she exclaimed. "Go away and leave me to discuss this matter with your sister. What can a child of your age understand about the responsibilities of marriage?"

"Considering I had to arrange the whole matter," Philia retorted, "I think I have as much right as anybody to discuss it."

"I order you to leave Zoe and myself alone," Madame Gadrilakis commanded with as much dignity as her dumpiness could achieve, and that was not a great deal. "Am I to be defied in my own house?"

"But I'm the only person in the house who knows "

"Enough, you self-willed girl! I order you to leave us Am I to discuss marriage in front of a child? Is that what we have come to nowadays?"

"I shall tell pappa that you are talking nonsense to Zoe and putting silly fancies into her head," Philia threatened "Zoe, why don't you tell mamma you won't talk about John unless she can talk sensibly?"

At this moment Nicolas Gadrilakis himself came into the room, and Philia was quick to plunge him into an argument with his wife, of which she and Zoe took advantage to escape from maternal inquisitiveness.

Madame Gadrilakis decided to take advantage of the first opportunity to have a heart-to-heart talk with her future son-in-law

"I am so glad we can have a little time to ourselves," she told him one evening about a week after the engagement was announced when her daughters had not returned from a visit to a house on the other side of the island, whither they had gone with Helena and Basil Roussos John had insisted that Vasili was to continue to act as escort to the girls if he felt like doing so The young man had made his effort to face up to the fact, and John was anxious to give his pride every chance.

"I am sure you understand the anxiety of a mother about the future happiness of her daughter, Commander "

"Naturally," John agreed He was wishing he had remained at the Bureau to finish that report on the present political situation in Athens This was the mother of Zoe, but even that could not prevent his thinking her a dumpy and rather tiresome little woman, whom it was not surprising to find treated by her daughters as a family joke

"In many ways Zoe takes after me, which indeed is natural "

"Very natural "

"And so she will suffer acutely if in the future she should find your love was cooling."

"That's true of most women, isn't it?"

Madame Gadrilakis sighed deeply.

"Indeed yes, Commander. We all suffer. But some of us suffer more acutely than others. Now if it were Philia I should not be worrying. Philia is completely hard. She is my daughter, but she does not seem to have inherited any of my disposition. It is a sad thing to confess, Commander, but I have found her quite unmanageable. Even in the cradle she was self-willed. Zoe, however, is different. Zoe is really much less capable of understanding what life means than Philia. She takes after me. I am an idealist, Commander. I have always kept before me a beautiful vision of life, and in spite of my disappointments I still keep before me that beautiful vision. My husband on the other hand is extremely matter of fact, and I am sorry to say that the older he grows the more matter of fact he becomes. It is very sad for me. I know how much the English pride themselves on being matter of fact, but I do hope, Commander, that you won't be too matter of fact with my little Zoe. We cannot live on poesy, but because we cannot live on it surely that does not mean we must ignore it altogether."

"Certainly not," John assented. "And if it is any consolation to you, Madame Gadrilakis, let me assure you that I am poetically in love with Zoe."

"Ah, but you are not married yet. Will you love her as poetically when she is my age? That's what a woman demands. Men are different. Men, especially when they are much preoccupied with business, are inclined to forget that a woman remains a woman. Now, I do not want you to think that I have had an unhappy married life, Commander. In many respects it has been happy, and when my husband and I were first married and lived much more simply than we live now it was an extremely happy life."

But during the last two or three years my husband has neglected me. You are entering the family, Commander. We can be frank with one another. I have sometimes suspected that Nicolas was keeping a mistress "

Madame Gadrilakis darted a quick dark searching glance at John to note how he reacted to this abrupt revelation of her anxiety.

"Well, naturally I know nothing about that," said John. "But it seems to me most unlikely "

"You think it's unlikely . . . even here in Lipsia, which I must say I am getting extremely tired of. I miss the Athens shops, Commander. And the society here is excessively dull "

"If you are wondering whether Mr Gadrilakis is interested in anybody in Lipsia," said John, "I can assure you positively that you can put such an idea out of your head. I know most of what is going on in Lipsia, and I should certainly have heard if Mr Gadrilakis were interested in anything except his business and the club he frequents."

"But men always shield one another," Madame Gadrilakis reminded him. "That is where women are so much more sincere. They are always anxious to warn another woman if there is anything wrong."

"I assure you I am not shielding your husband. I have heard not a word of scandal about him. He is a man whom everybody respects and likes."

"It gives me great pleasure to hear that. But I know how easily men are led away by a pretty face and a young face. I do hope that it is not just prettiness and youth which have attracted you to my little Zoe. You are a man of the world, Commander, and you must have had a wide experience of women."

Again that quick dark searching glance.

"Oh yes, but that experience has taught me to love Zoe. I had not considered marriage until I met her."

"And you do not think you will regret the tie that marriage is?"

"You may be sure I considered that carefully before I asked Zoe to marry me. Once a man reaches thirty he does not plunge into marriage. And when you remember that I am sixteen years older than Zoe surely you need not worry about pretty young faces leading me astray. I think it is I who should be worrying."

"Ah, I think of my husband."

"But, Madame Gadrilakis, you are doing him an injustice unless you have already."

"Oh, no, no," she interrupted quickly. "I have never been able to convict him of infidelity, but that makes it all the worse. The uncertainty is seriously affecting my health. I get very little consideration, Commander. My husband laughs at me. Philia contradicts and crosses me whenever she can. And even Zoe has managed to get engaged to you without my knowing anything about it."

At this point the sound of the girls' voices was heard.

"There you are, you see," Madame Gadrilakis said in an aggrieved voice. "There you are, Commander, as soon as you and I had a chance to have a little talk together they all come back."

"But they didn't know we were having a little talk."

"No, they didn't *know*. But if they *had* known it wouldn't have made the slightest difference. They would have come back all the same. And just one more thing. I hope you won't spoil Zoe by speaking Greek with her. I never had the advantage of learning English myself, but she has learnt English, and she ought to be made to speak it. Zoe is very lazy. Some people think I am lazy, but nobody realizes what I suffer from my nerves. I *have* to lie down for the greater part of the day. Make her practise her English, Commander."

The dinner they had that night at the Café was the merriest they had had yet, and afterwards they drove

across the island to a sandy beach and sat there till one o'clock lighted by the full moon of May

"We'll bathe to-morrow, sir," Mervyn Iredale declared. "The water's in grand condition."

But they did not bathe next night, for at five o'clock the following afternoon, when John was writing his report on the political situation in Athens, James Yarrow arrived back from Salonica stuttering with rage, and when he had told his story John put the report aside and went on board the *Argo*, Mudros his destination

The Admiral was again in his bath when John reached the *Swallowtail*, but he asked Goodger not to let him know he was here until the ablutions and dressing were over

"Good lord," Sir William exclaimed when he came into the cabin and found John waiting for him "What's brought you here?"

"I thought, sir, you authorized me to send Lieutenant Yarrow into Salonica to recruit agents to get into Constantinople and ascertain about the damage done to the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*?"

"Certainly I did Has he got them?"

"No, sir "

"Good gracious me, Ogilvie, you don't seem able to do anything I want I really don't know what use your blessed organization is to anybody. I made it perfectly clear "

"I know you did, sir As soon as I returned to Lipsia I sent Yarrow up to Salonica in the *Whinchat* and with him the best man I have at recruiting agents I'd hoped to let you know by now that everything was in train, but unfortunately the military authorities took it upon themselves to arrest Lieutenant Yarrow and also the man with him."

"Arrested him? What for?"

"For daring to set foot in Salonica"

The Admiral had emerged from the bathroom with the healthy pink of childhood suffusing his countenance. That healthy pink began to be mottled here and there with erubescant blotches.

"I don't understand," he growled.

"Yarrow had been in Salonica two days waiting while my man Priphtes"

"He's a Greek, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir. That highlander from the Epirus I was telling you."

"Quite. Go on. What happened?"

"On the third day at four P.M. and four military police came to the house where Yarrow was staying, arrested him, marched him right through the streets of Salonica . . . a naval officer in uniform, sir."

The erubescence was darkening to purple. An angry flush like the red sky of morning which warns the shepherd had suffused all that healthy infantine pink.

"Shut him up in the guard-house or whatever it's called," John continued, "kept him there five days, refused to allow him to communicate with me, and finally marched him down to a ship bound for Lipsia with a notification that if he landed in Salonica again he would be instantly arrested."

The Admiral put up a hand and unhooked his collar.

"But that's not the worst, sir. Priphtes had recruited two good men. He and these men were also arrested, and the military authorities have not only refused to release them on Lieutenant Yarrow's request but have sent them up to a prisoners' camp somewhere."

"But I don't understand," the Admiral gasped. "Did Yarrow make it clear to them he was in Salonica by my orders?"

"Certainly, sir. He made a strong point of that."

"And what was the answer?"

"The answer was that you had no right to recruit agents in Salonica without notifying the military authorities "

"No right? Did you say 'no right'?" the Admiral asked in a tremulous voice which fury had sharpened to a pitch approaching the pipe and whistle of a pantaloon "Goodger," he shouted, recovering his bass, "bring me a glass of water. Iced Well iced And lay a place for Lieutenant-Commander Ogilvie What are we going to do about this?"

"I beg pardon, sir?" Goodger turned to ask.

"Not you, you nincompoop Fetch me that iced water."

"Ay, ay, sir."

The Admiral had sunk into one of his chintz-covered armchairs.

"What are we going to do about this, I say?"

"Well, sir, I've been lying awake in a rage nearly all night, thinking what could be done," said John "And if you'll allow me to submit a plan ."

"Go on Something must be done at once D-did you say 'no right'?"

"You had no right to recruit agents in Salonica," John repeated firmly

The Admiral's fingers clawed the air Doubtless he was clutching at the ghostly throats of gibbering majors, colonels, and generals

"Go on, Ogilvie, I'm waiting "

"Well, sir, all Intelligence work outside the Salonica area of operations is centred under your direction "

"I was under that impression "

"Therefore any island on which Intelligence work is being carried on comes directly under you?"

"It does "

"Well, sir, at the present moment, whether with your permission I do not know, the island of Thasos is being

used as a training-ground for Intelligence agents both by the British and French military authorities. There are now on the island of Thasos about twenty of them being trained. If you will let me have a trawler I will go over to Thasos and arrest some of these agents."

"Good! Capital! That's a capital suggestion! But you shall have a destroyer. A trawler's too slow. As soon as you've had breakfast, I'll see about getting you over to Thasos in a destroyer. You can arrest the lot. Did you really say 'no right'? It's—it's almost unbelievable."

"I have brought Lieutenant Yarrow up to Mudros with me, sir, you might care to have his report."

Goodger had returned with the iced water, which the Admiral gulped down.

"The weather's getting damned hot, what? I'm suffocating already this morning. What's the temperature in this cabin, Goodger?"

"Seventy-one, sir."

"Is that all? I don't believe the damned thermometer's working properly. It feels to me like ninety. Poof!"

After a consultation with his Chief of Staff the Admiral was persuaded to send a wireless to Salonica demanding the release of Priphtes and his men under the threat of closing the island of Thasos to the Military. Captain Lambourne had not welcomed the idea of a destroyerful of military agents on his hands.

The battle waged all day by wireless, but just before dusk the Military surrendered unconditionally, and James Yarrow made a stately landing at Salonica from a light cruiser, whence a fortnight later three men by devious ways were smuggled into Turkey.

That night a northerly gale sprang up in which John and Mervyn Iredale spent a wretched night of seasickness on the voyage back to Lipsia.

The next day the *Whinchat* called for the mails.

"You got a bit of a dusting last night, didn't you?"

asked Merridew, the skipper, a hard-bitten little R N R. Commander, with a scraggy goatee "You should have waited to come down with us "

"We're safer from submarines in the *Argo*," said John "You'd be safe enough with us," Merridew barked "They've had plenty of shots at us But we're too fast for them Twenty-one knots, my lad "

"For goodness' sake, don't brag," John begged "I hate to hear anybody tempting fortune "

Merridew laughed drily He had a plan for buried treasure in Mauritius, for which when the war was over he and his wife were going to search He had offered John a share of this if he would accompany the expedition

"Well," said John, "if you don't mind risking your own life, why risk the treasure? You ought to leave that plan with me. I'll lock it up in my safe You'll get hit by a torpedo one day and you'll lose your life, rushing below to rescue your treasure plan "

Captain Merridew winked.

"Wouldn't you like to have it! No, no I've carried that treasure plan round with me for a good many years now. It's a mascot. If I parted with it I *would* be afraid of getting hit But we're too fast for them They'll never get us Well, I must be pushing off. See you again next week "

From the balcony of his room at the old Turkish Consulate John watched the fast despatch-boat steaming north-west at full speed over the blue waters now tranquil and sparkling after the brief gale In the garden on the other side of the road the crimson roses were still in their prime, but a pomegranate-tree was coming into fiery orange-scarlet flower, and the cicadas were rasping loudly Spring in this Aegean land was past, though it was not yet mid-May. Summer was here Summer with Zoe. But he must get back to the Bureau and deal with the letters the *Whinchat* had brought.

Among them was one from the C O. of Signals, Salonica.

*From Lt-Colonel J O L Bransby-Cuffe D S O R E.
to Lt-Commander J P Ogilvie D S C. R N V R*

*In response to the request of Lieutenant J D Yarrow
R N V R for three pairs of pigeons on the S Y Argo, I
have to inform you that it is not considered desirable to
supply birds to irregularly constituted cots. I therefore
propose to erect a pigeon-cot on Lipsia, supply same with
birds, and attach a corporal and two men to take charge.
This should suit your requirements*

"Wireless would have been cheaper," John observed to Kellaway

A week later ground was rented The cot was erected. A corporal and two sappers of the Royal Engineers arrived to look after the birds A month later they were allowed their first flight Five weeks later they had all been shot to supply the larders of the island

"Much cheaper," Kellaway agreed. "And we have no pigeons "

The moon of May shrank until it was dissolved in stars There were a few nights of warm starshine, and then the moon waxed again to hang as if heavy with its own gold low in the southern sky Now that the difficulty of seeing Zoe had passed, John could work from early morning until the hour came to dine in that marble Square and afterwards drive with her across the dusty high land to where coves of gleaming sand sloped toward that moon-dyed sea The petals of the roses in the grey-walled garden had faded and fallen. The white and purple caper-flowers shrivelled as the sun struck fiercely on the crumbling walls from the crevices of which they had flaunted themselves. The leaves of the asphodels turned

to dry straps. It did not matter. With cups of Turkish coffee at intervals through the blazing day one could write reports and read reports and read reports and write reports until night conferred her freedom on body and mind. No need now to bother about secret trysts in that grey-walled garden. And if the flowers were withered what did it matter when every dusk brought Zoe herself like a flower of the night shedding fragrance?

One day at the beginning of June Kellaway's presence was demanded in Myconos to adjudicate in one of those continually recurring disputes that the control of these islands entailed. John decided to take the opportunity of returning some of the hospitality he and his officers had received in Lipsia by inviting a party of their friends to visit Delos in the *Argo*. There was no danger from submarines on such a trip, for although the Myconos Channel at night had been a favourite lurking-ground for these monsters they would not venture so far in as Delos at any rate during the day. Nevertheless, the fear of submarines was so acute by now that not many ventured to trust themselves to the sea even for those safe twenty miles. Indeed, it was all he could do to persuade Zoe to come, and the only shadow of disagreement that ever fell upon them during those weeks of May and June was cast by this timidity of hers. In the end, however, she was persuaded, unable to hold out against John's arguments supported by Philia and Helena and Basil Roussos. Among others who also came were Euphrosyne and Aglaia Ladas, not to mention Theodore himself, whose ringing bass was enough to frighten any German or Austrian U-boat out of the Aegean.

It was a day of breathless heat. When they landed on the sacred isle from the sheltered roadstead formed by the adjacent small island of Rheneia the air was quivering above the white ruins of temples and houses, and after they had toiled up the rough paving of the ancient street nearly

to the top of the hill, John suggested to Zoe that they should let the others continue with their sight-seeing, but that he and she should go back and sit by the reeds of a small stream which flowed through welcome greenery into the waters of the roadstead quiet and dark as the blue glass of a physician's old bottle.

So they sat beside the shallow stream, and John rigged two match-boxes with the feathers of terns and set them afloat. Away on the jumbled hillside they could hear the voices of the others calling to one another about this or that discovery, calling to come and see the four great marble lions or the mosaic of the dog that once warned thieves away from the house in the forecourt of which it had survived more than two thousand years. An ancient shepherd in soiled and tattered fustanella passed them by and stopped to regard curiously the feather-rigged match-boxes and the two sitting there beside the reeds. He was the solitary inhabitant of the sacred isle which Zeus had chained with adamant to the floor of the deep that it should float no more about the bright Aegean but be at rest for Leto to bring forth the Divine Twins beneath the palm-tree's scant shade. John asked him if he had ever seen a submarine in the roadstead while he was tending his sheep and goats or his patch of corn already golden-ripe. The ancient man looked bewildered by the question. He was as ignorant of submarines as of Apollo and Artemis, and passed on his way no doubt to ponder often in the future over this perplexing encounter.

One match-box drifted into the reeds along the farther bank of the stream where it would probably stay weather-bound for the rest of this summer. The other was carried very slowly toward the sea. John lay with his head in Zoe's lap, looking up into her eyes. Thus gazing he felt as heedless of time as if he himself were a match-box rigged with a tern's feather and drifting out toward a summer sea.

"I love you," he murmured

The voices of the others among the white ruins on the hill above them were disembodied like birdsong heard upon the fringe of sleep

"Are we not rude to be sitting here away from your guests?" she asked anxiously

"It is so restful to lie here thinking of nothing but how much I love you I'm beginning to regret now that we didn't make up our minds to be married this June What are we waiting for really?"

"We are waiting till I can go back to the Piræus, please, and choose myself clothes," she said firmly. "Here there are no clothes."

"What else do you want except that pretty white dress you are wearing to-day?"

"But I will not be married in a dress of last summer. Perhaps, if it is true that Venizelos will come to Athens and the King will go, pappa will take us very soon home, and I will get my clothes."

"I shan't be able to have a lot of new clothes," he reminded her in mock reproachfulness.

"Ah, but I must be so pretty, because when we are married you must love me more than now."

"I do not believe that's possible"

"Oh, but you must"

"Will you love *me* more?"

"Always more and more," she murmured, gazing into futurity beyond Rheneia

"Darling Zoe, you have some delicious freckles round your nose."

"What can freckles be, please?"

"I don't know the Greek for a freckle," he said, putting a finger on one of them

"*Phakida*," she exclaimed distastefully. "Yes, the sun is very wicked to my face"

"Phœbus Apollo, hearken," John chanted. "Here on your sacred isle a freckled maid appeals for mercy But I love those freckles, *Zoe mou* Don't try to get rid of them,

for they are the marks of this summer that gave us to each other. There's one particular freckle I wouldn't lose for anything. Ten years hence I want to see it and say, 'There's the freckle which the sun-god gave you when you and I floated match-boxes upon the stream of his own isle of Delos, and when we lay beside the reeds and talked of love and forgot the world was at war.' "

"And so you love my bad freckles?"

"I love you and all of you."

"Sometimes I must ask why you can love me."

"Lean over to that stream. You'll find the answer clearly written upon it."

Later that day when the hills of Tenos and the little windmills of Myconos and the jumbled white ruins of Delos were stained with the violet of sunset John stood with Euphrosyne Ladas, leaning over the rails of the *Argo* and watching the islands astern.

"You are very happy, John, I think."

"Exquisitely happy," he assented.

"Your Zoe is shy with me, but it is easy for me to understand you are happy in her love. As I came down the hill and saw you both sitting by the reeds I was at first a little piqued that you should come to Delos and pay no attention to it. And then I said to myself that you were closer to the spirit of Delos sitting there in the sun with your Zoe than all of us who had wandered hither and thither seeking for the past among those ruins. Giorgione would have understood, and thinking of Giorgione I also understood. At first I thought you had chosen for yourself a girl who was too too ordinary to content you, but now I think you have found the secret of life."

John remembered that walk above Citrano in 1914.

"The secret they sang to Ulysses

When, ages ago,

He heard and he knew this life's secret

I hear and I know," he quoted.

"Yes, yes," she murmured.

"But you did not think I had found that secret until to-day?"

"I was not sure But to-day I was sure."

"What made you sure?"

"A sudden flood of life from you two people in white after the dead whiteness of the ruins like bones I wonder if I shall ever find somebody with whom I can feel sure that the mingled life of us is the immortal essence of this earth "

"In other words whether you will fall in love as you know you are capable of loving and as you know you deserve to love?"

"That is what I mean "

"Don't forget you have been granted poetry, Euphrosyne You might fall in love and lose your poetry."

She made a gesture of impatience

"I would rather sit by the reeds on the shore of Delos in perfect communion with somebody than write greater poetry than Sappho. And Sappho would have preferred that also. She wrote because she was denied that perfection."

"You know I was on the verge of falling in love with you that October I first came to Lipsia?" John asked

"Then you can be very thankful you did not topple over, because people who are on the verge of falling in love and at last fall often hurt themselves a great deal "

"Yes, you're right, for of course it is nonsense to talk about the verge of love. You either love or do not love However, what you did give me was a love of Hellas, and in my love for Zoe that is included What she is of Hellas touches with a further magic what she is of girlhood To you she will not seem an ideal personification, I'm afraid "

"On the contrary, I think she may be the ideal personification She is not the Parthenon She is not Parnassus But who shall say that the wild rock-rose is not as

much an expression of the soul of Hellas as the Parthenon or Parnassus? Anyway, I am glad, very very glad that you have found her in my country, because you have loved Hellas and you have done much to show your love "

The islands had discarded their rosy-violet draperies. They seemed to be composing themselves for the embrace of dusk John looked along the deck

"There she is, John," said Euphrosyne "Her cheeks have kept the sunlight How small she is, how small, and how fair!"

"You no longer criticize her "

"No, because I know now that you love one another, and that it is not the foolish wasteful flirtation I thought it was last winter Go to her now, John, for I should not like her to think you were neglecting her."

"She will not think that. All that marred our afternoon was the dread of failing in social duty "

"So small and so fair," she murmured again. "So like a little girl Make her happy, John "

Zoe was anxious to know if Euphrosyne Ladas was offended at the way she and the rest of John's guests had been left to their own devices while he had spent nearly all the time with herself

"Not a bit She quite understood "

"She is very aristocratic I shall never be like that," Zoe sighed "You're not afraid that one day you will be ashamed of me?"

"Zoe *mon*, I'm not beginning life, you know. As a matter of fact Euphrosyne Ladas was admiring you. She thought you and I were perfectly matched "

"Did you tell her how much I was admiring her? I would like much to be tall and slim and aristocratic."

"But I would love you to be what you are I would not have you different in any way, though I admit there are times when I wish you would remain eighteen for ever and I'm even just a little sad that you will be nineteen in

August and nineteen when we are married in September I haven't told you yet I've kept this as the end of this summer's day, but I have taken that little house on the cliff below the old Turkish Consulate It's tiny, but large enough for you and me in Lipsia And it has a garden full of flowers "

She clapped her hands

"Oh, I am so excited, John Oh, can we go to look at it to-morrow "

"Yes, we'll go to-morrow, "

That evening John dined in the Square with Yarrow, Iredale, Kellaway, and Brackenbury Madame Gadrilakis who had almost shrieked at the notion of going to Delos in the *Argo* had nevertheless felt forsaken all day. So her daughters, who were full of sunlight and sea air, agreed to dine at home Basil Roussos brought John news of the decision, and John had not the heart to deprive Vasili of the pleasure of dining with them and without him by pressing him to remain and dine with the rest of the party in the Square.

"Queer-looking chap, isn't he?" said Yarrow "He always reminds me of an albino lion "

They had finished dinner and were lingering over coffee, watching the summery crowd promenading round the bandstand in the Square, though there was no band, when the owner of the restaurant came across to present the compliments of an English naval officer who had come into port this evening and invite Commander Ogilvie and his officers to take wine with him

John looked up to see the weather-beaten skipper of a trawler waving to him from another table He went across to be greeted in the broadest Aberdeen accent as a brother Scot. The skipper had heard there was an Ogilvie in this island He himself was a Leslie, but his mother was an Ogilvie and he couldn't leave the island without shaking the hand of an Ogilvie and drinking a dram with

him The dram was to be champagne, and the others were to come over to his table and drink with him and his two mates to the glorious sight of two Ogilvies meeting on the island of Lipsia

"In champagne?" John repeated a little doubtfully

"In champagne. Mon, the Admiralty have sent me a gratuity of eighty-seven pounds twelve shillings and saxpence for sinking a submarine. I'm a man of substance. And the joke of it is I don't believe we ever sank this bloody submarine at all. I reported a spot of oil, and they've sent me eighty-seven pounds twelve shillings and saxpence and comparative emoluments and gratuities to all my bloody officers and the whole of my bloody crew. Mon, it's the greatest joke of the war But och hell, what of it? If a mon canna see a spottie of oil on the water without receiving a gratuity of eighty-seven pounds twelve shillings and saxpence from the bloody Admiralty, him being a Leslie himself but his mother an Ogilvie, he canna pass another Ogilvie in a bloody island without celebrating the coincidence Mind you, I'm not saying that champagne is much better for a celebration than Eno's Fruit Salts, but it's better than this bloody *rash-youaretoo* and when one Scot meets another Scot in a bloody Greek island to celebrate his gratuity for sinking a submarine that wasn't there in my opinion it can't be celebrated with *rashyouaretoo*. Moreover, and in addition to my aforesaid remarks, you can no more get doucelly drunk on *rashyouaretoo* than what you can on Owbridge's Lung Tonic *Rashyouaretoo!* And bloody rash you are too if you mix red ink with eucabloodilyptus and call the prescription wine "

So champagne was put on the table instead of *retzinato*, and by the time the healths of Scotland, Aberdeen, Leslies, Ogilvies, the Royal Navy, the Admiralty, Captain K who controlled the Aegean movements of ketches or trawlers, the Vice-Admiral, Venizelos, and the poor —r

of a submarine if it *was* sunk, besides the individual healths of the various officers thus gathered in conviviality, most of the champagne left from John's dinner to celebrate his engagement and the Japanese officer's all night celebration with the waiter had become a memory

"Well, if that poor bloody submarine had drunk as much champagne as we've drunk," said Skipper Leslie, emitting a richly gaseous belch, "there's no depth-charge made could have kept it at the bottom of the sea. It would have come up to the surface with a rush. Eighty-seven pounds twelve shillings and sixpence for a spottie of oil. Mon, as against trawling there's a great deal to be said in favour of war."

When the champagne was exhausted John invited Skipper Leslie with the Mate and the Bos'n to come up to the old Turkish Consulate where there was a couple of bottles of whisky and Yarrow played the flute. The effect of the whisky and flute in combination was to persuade Skipper Leslie that he was capable of dancing a reel, at the conclusion of which he was definitely drunk. At about half-past one he, the Mate, and the Bos'n were put in the car and Mervyn Iredale drove them down to the harbour. There he was persuaded to go on board the trawler and read the letter from the Admiralty announcing the award of the gratuity, after which he could not leave the trawler without a *deoch an doruis*. The drink must have been large and the door narrow, for Iredale did not get away from the trawler until nearly four o'clock, when feeling uncertain of being able to drive the car back to the old Turkish Consulate he left it outside the Bureau and slept in it until he was wakened at seven o'clock by the large face of Dr Miltiades Vampas anxiously gazing in at him through the window.

"You are ill, Lieutenant?" he asked. "Permit me to prescribe."

"Not ill at all," Iredale contradicted. "I sank a sub-

marine last night In fact I may have sunk two A spot of oil "

"Yes, yes, Lieutenant," the Doctor exclaimed, and retired into the Bureau whence presently he emerged a glass of creamy-pink liquid in his hand to find Iredale fast asleep again

"Lieutenant Iredale "

"Spot of oil "

"Here you are, Lieutenant "

Dr Vampas held the glass to Iredale's lips. Something in the feel of it kindled a memory in his sleep-drenched mind He took a gulp. Sleep fled

"My god, what on earth's this ghastly stuff?"

"Oil, Lieutenant You asked me for oil. It'll do you good Drink it right up "

"Oil? Not castor-oil?"

"Yes, yes, Lieutenant. Prepared by me with all agreeableness of manufacture."

Iredale leapt out of the car and made for the Bureau, followed by the Doctor carrying the creamy-pink mixture and entreating him to drain it to the last drop

"Take it away," Iredale shouted in the large outer office, the only one as yet unlocked. "Take it away, or I'll throw this typewriter at you "

"But, Lieutenant, I swear to you that prepared by me with such agreeableness of manufacture you cannot savour the castor-oil You can only savour the emulsion of rose water and milk with which the savour of oil is most agreeably blended "

"But I don't want castor-oil, you juggins. I'll be sick in a minute in my chair if you don't take that ghastly pink mixture away "

"Courage, Lieutenant."

"Give it to me," said Iredale suddenly.

The beaming doctor hurried forward with the glass, Iredale rushed with it to the window and poured the con-

tents out just missing a boy who was beating an octopus into tenderness on the pavement below

By this time Iredale felt competent to drive the car back to the old Turkish Consulate where he had a cold bath and appeared at breakfast slightly blurred but otherwise all right

"Did you stop on board the trawler last night?" John asked

"No, sir, I slept outside the Bureau. When I came ashore after seeing our friends on board I found the car appeared to think it was a submarine, and I decided it was wiser not to tempt it by driving it along the quay. Vampas woke me this morning."

"Well, I want you to get hold of the keys of the cottage on the cliff across the road. I want to show my girl round it this afternoon."

The flat roof of the cottage in which John was proposing to live after his marriage was visible from the balcony of his room in the old Turkish Consulate, but by now it was covered with a morning-glory which before it faded in the heat of the midday sun looked like a pool of deep blue water among the trees that embowered it. There were only three rooms and the furniture would have to be supplemented. At present it consisted of a table and two wooden chairs. In front of the cottage was a small terrace over the parapet of which one looked down some forty feet into the sea at the base of the cliff.

"Not a bad little cottage in which to start housekeeping," John said to Zoe. "I'll have the whole place distempered over in ivory. I don't think it will be too cold in winter, and anyway perhaps we shan't be here in winter, though I don't see any chance of the war's stopping at the end of this summer."

They passed from the room with the table and the two

chairs into the empty room which would be their bedroom. Here was a second window looking southward across the marble villas that fringed the cliffs on this side of the harbour. There was no view, however, from that window, because a yellow bignonia was tumbling over it and beyond were the pomegranate trees. The white-and-blue light from the window looking eastward across the sea so completely dominated the green twilight percolating through the vegetation to the south window that one had a sharp reminder of how much this island earth was subordinate to the sea which surrounded it. John thought what a good subject this empty room would make for a painting to be called 'The Triumph of Ocean.' And turning to look at Zoe and the way the rose of her cheeks and the lustrous copper of her hair glowed so victoriously he thought of a companion picture that should be called 'The Triumph of Earth,' for she was more vital than the yellow trumpets of the bignonia, than the nacarat of those pomegranate flowers, more vital than all that sequence of bloom he had watched in this garden since February, almond blushing to peach-blossom, peach-blossom deepening to the fierce carmine of the Judas-trees, the fierce carmine of that subdued by the crimson roses, and now the roses forgotten in the orange-scarlet pomegranate flowers. She with her cheeks and her tresses summed up in herself the whole flowery sequence and her eyes held all the sea.

"Our room, my heart," he cried, and lifted her in his arms to kiss her like a child.

It was a few days after this that news came of the return of Venizelos to Athens and of King Constantine's abdication in favour of his second son Alexander. It was said that Venizelos had wanted an English prince, but that England had refused though France was willing. It was said too that the young king desired to marry a beautiful Greek girl and that the prime minister would not consent she should become Queen. John believed Venizelos was

making a grave mistake for which the country might one day suffer. If a king loved he would be a better king with the woman he loved beside him as queen, and the people over whom he ruled would be the better people for such a ruler.

Nicolas Gadrilakis came to consult John about taking his family back to the Piræus. It was pleasant here in Lipsia and he should always remember these six months as among the happiest of his life, a happiness which had been crowned by the engagement between John and his elder daughter, but happy though he was here business demanded his presence at the Piræus now that the wretched dissensions of Greece appeared to be ended. Moreover, his wife was anxious to be home again.

"And she has been very nervous, Commander, during our stay in Lipsia. You may have noticed how nervous she is. We have to humour these ladies. She will be better when she is back in her own house and can drive in to look at the shops in Athens. And then there is Zoe who informs me that she has to arrange about her trousseau."

"I dislike the idea of your all going," John said. "But I understand the reasons."

"And now to ask a favour," the shipowner continued. "My wife is terrified by the prospect of having to cross to the mainland in one of these wretched little local steamers, and I was wondering if you could obtain permission for us to travel to the Piræus in the *Whinchat*. She is so fast and safe. I spoke to Captain Merridew whom I have known for many years and he told me that if Captain Majendie gave his permission he would be willing to take us. She makes the journey to Piræus in well under five hours. I do hope it can be managed. The sinking of the *Naupha* last week made a very disagreeable impression on my family."

The *Naupha* had been one of those small Greek steamers sailing between the Piræus and the islands, which had been

sunk off Siphnos without loss of life but much to the alarm of those who were contemplating an early return to the mainland

"The *Whinchat* will be leaving here for the Piræus on her way back from Mudros and Salonica the day after tomorrow I think it will be advisable to ask the Admiral's permission I'll telegraph at once "

John thought that if they must go it was best they should go soon He dreaded the idea of spending days of uncertainty and postponement Moreover, although he was far from allowing Zoe to interfere in the least with his work there were too many people jealous of the position he occupied and the organization he had built up to make it advisable to add oil to the vinegar on envy's tongue.

The Admiral's reply was favourable It was settled that the Gadrilakis family should sail in the *Whinchat* on her next voyage to the Piræus.

On the night before they left Theodore Ladas was giving a dance at Grazia di Dio to which he had invited the officers of H M S *Catapult*, the officers attached to the British Control Bureau, and all the youth and beauty of Lipsia Zoe was inclined to think that the strain of packing would prevent her going, but John, supported by Philia, was firm and in the end she went

It was a calm cloudless night of mid-June The black and white company dancing in the great loggia seemed the personification of music itself

Shortly before two o'clock John was waltzing with Euphrosyne Ladas to the Valse Amoureuse

"Euphrosyne, I want to say good-bye to Zoe," he told her "Would you mind if I took her down to the orange-grove?"

"Of course not, John When this dance is over I give you the key of the gate at the bottom of the path "

"You're kind and sympathetic "

"But cheer up, John, the parting is not for long. The

next dance is a quadrille, and in the figure where we walk arm and arm in procession directed by the master of ceremonies with a wand you can escape from the quadrille with your Zoe and say good-bye to her. We shall not stop dancing until three o'clock. It is now only two o'clock."

Round the loggia moved the black and white procession of the dancers in a quadrille figure unfamiliar to most of the English present, and not merely round the loggia, but out on the terrace and along the garden paths as the white wand of the master of ceremonies directed them. When the procession was turning back to the loggia to conclude the figure John and Zoe slipped away into the shimmering world ruled by the waning golden semilune. He held her hand as they went down the zigzag cliff path, stopping in each tiled gazebo to express in silent kisses the rapture of this summer night. On the cooler air the aromatic breath of the cliff shrubs hung like incense. They came at last to the iron gate which John unlocked with Euphrosyne's key, and they passed through into the solemnity of the orange-grove, their footsteps muffled by the fading grass.

"Be careful not to let the green come off the trees on your white dress," he warned her.

And for answer she drew closer to him, so that one who had seen them walking through that colonnade of slim trunks would have fancied they were a single white shape.

"I believe I can still smell orange-blossom," John said, looking up to search for the waxen stars. But he could discern none in the dense canopy of greenery above them, and the half-moon was not bright enough to light up the small green oranges.

They emerged from the grove on the crescent of sand, and saw in the sky away to the south-west the moon hung like a great fragment of orange above the gently breathing sea.

"*Phōs mou*," he murmured, holding her to him where they stood in that crescent of brown sand between the unharvested sea and the scented summery earth, "light lovelier than the moon to me, it will not be for very long. In ten weeks I will be coming to marry you, and remember it was ten weeks after I met you before I told you that I loved you. They passed quickly These will pass quickly "

She looked out to sea with a shudder.

"I wish I must not go away from you in a ship "

"It's a nice large, fast, safe ship. This time twelve hours from now you'll be seeing from the deck the mainland Do you remember when you brought me the pie on the *Margarita*? That's about where you'll be."

"And you'll be out of sight," she sighed.

"But you'll be thinking of me?"

"Oh, I will be thinking of you, thinking of you, thinking of you," she exclaimed passionately.

"And of these nights of May and June, and of the better nights of May and June than ever next year whether the war is over or not I'm glad Vasili will be travelling with you to-morrow He has been very good, poor boy."

"You understand now why I was not wanting to hurt him?"

"Perfectly "

They sat for a while on the burnt herbage at the edge of the orange-grove above the sand

"I came here first with Euphrosyne Ladas," he told her. "And I wondered why I did not fall in love with her. It was October then But I did not dream that within two years I should be here with the girl I was going to marry If you and I come and sit here next October we shall be married then "

And the rest of the time they had for each other upon that summer's night was spent in silence, her white dress mingling with his white uniform so that if a fisherman had rowed round one of the incurving horns of the cliffs

he would have fancied he beheld upon that sequestered strand a ghost

"Be careful the green doesn't come off on your dress," he warned her again as they walked over the faded grass of the orange-grove among the slim serried trunks

"I would like to stain it" She rubbed her arm down a trunk "Now when I look at that dress I will have a little memory of to-night, and I will never wear this dress ever again"

The iron gate clashed and closed behind them. The key was turned in the lock

At every tiled gazebo where pine or cypress cut off the light of that waning orange moon they parted afresh.

"My love, my love, it's you who fly to İstanbul," he cried

"Please, please, what can that mean?"

"The maid of Athens to whom Byron gave his heart. That first night in the *Margarita* after the nightmare we had all been through as soon as I saw you, at the back of my mind I was saying '*Zoe mou, se agapō*' But this is not a long or hopeless parting So I can feel happier than Byron."

They kissed for the last time where from the face of the rock a fan of rosemary brushed against their cheeks. John picked a sprig and gave it to her.

"In remembrance of to-night Give me a piece."

She broke off some of the grey-green leaves and he put them in his pocket.

In the loggia the black and white company of guests were gathered in farewell and the ringing bass of Theodore Ladas was telling them how welcome they had all been.

The next morning at eleven o'clock the *Whinchat* with gathering speed went surging past the mole of the harbour at the end of which John stood to shout a last good-bye.

He could see Zoe waving from the stern for a long while in that bright air, and Philia beside her, and Helena and Vasili with whom he had had an emotional five minutes before they sailed.

The day passed slowly. There was no great rush of work, for the bags brought from Salonica and Mudios had little of importance, and the bags for Malta, Athens, and London had been sent off with the *Whinchat*. Nevertheless, John was in no mood to take a holiday. He had asked Captain Merridew to send a wireless signal as soon as the *Whinchat* reached the Piræus.

Two o'clock. He sipped his cup of Turkish coffee. They would be off the Zea Channel now. A perfect day. Not a ripple. The office was quiet. He had started closing it now during the worst heat of afternoon and opening it again at four o'clock. He tried to concentrate on a report for London on the effect of the King's abdication. His mind was with the *Whinchat*. Three o'clock. This was the hottest day they had had yet. He rang the bell and told one of the porters to make him a lemon-squash.

I must emphasize the great mistake that was made in bringing M. Venizelos to Athens with French troops instead of with troops of the Provisional Government. Had the neutral zone by Keratsini been given up and had a proper use been made of the 60,000 troops of the Provisional Government the moral effect would have been tremendous. It is now open to the anti-Venizelists to claim that King Constantine was driven out by French bayonets . . .

Four o'clock. They must be very near the Piræus now. In another half-hour they should be in. He should have a message at five o'clock at latest. Back in the office now. A great deal of chatter going on. Chatter and clatter. He rang the bell.

"Ask Miss Harford to speak to me. . . . Miss Har-

ford, when I arranged that you were all to take the afternoon off I didn't intend tea to be served in the office at four o'clock Surely you can get to work at once when you arrive back, and have your teas at home?"

"I'm sorry, Commander Ogilvie "

"Are there any telegrams in?"

"I believe there are two or three from the islands "

"Ask Mr Kellaway to get them decoded at once I want work in the Bureau to start at four o'clock "

He spoke a little irritably Miss Harford retired

Five minutes later she came back, and stood staring at John in silence

"What's the matter now?" he asked sharply. "You're looking very pale Are you ill?"

"No, I'm not ill, Commander Ogilvie It's only that . . ." She burst into tears Then he saw that she was fumbling with a piece of paper.

"Have you had bad news?"

"It's from Zea," she said

John felt his heart was stopping

"From Zea? Give me the telegram "

"It's so terrible I don't know how to give it to you But perhaps the first news is the worst."

He read.

Coastwatcher on south point of island reports despatch-boat Whinchat hit by torpedo from submarine and sank in three minutes feared heavy loss of life will telegraph further information later

"She may have been saved," Miss Harford whispered miserably.

John pulled himself together. It was necessary to communicate the news immediately to the S N O In a dry voice he asked for his cap and with the fatal piece of paper passed silently through the outer office The *Argo* was over at Naxos. He turned back.

"Telegraph urgently to Naxos for *Argo* to come back at once."

But it would be dark when he reached Zea

It was dark enough. One boatload of survivors had reached the shore, but the boat holding herself and her family had been smashed in the hurried launching and there was no doubt all were drowned. Vasili who could not win Zoe in life had won her in death.

In the Censor's office at Panderma the official charged with keeping an eye on correspondence in the interior of Turkey was turning over the letters. He opened one with the Stamboul postmark addressed to Kyria Marika Pappous at the Mileto post-office, and read idly through a screed of family news from her brother Demetrius. In reaching across for the stamp to mark the communication as passed by the Censor his hand brushed against the end of the cigarette in his mouth and some shreds of burning tobacco fell upon the notepaper. As he blew them off he noticed in pale coffee-coloured writing the letters *G-o-e-b* between the lines. The Censor sat up in his chair. He had been at his job for months and at last he might be rewarded. He warmed the letter carefully over a lamp. The script of the hidden communication appeared. The vision of himself in the near future as a pasha with three tails dazzled his fancy. He picked up the telephone-receiver.

Twenty-four hours later the Commandant of the Mileto garrison was examining the missive intercepted by the Panderma censor. Enquiries were set in motion. Forty-eight hours passed. On a hot June morning there were loud knocks on the door of Henry Peterman's house. His plump housekeeper Marika was grabbed by a couple of soldiers and dragged off shrieking. Peterman, fear eating at his vitals, went down to try to see the Vali. Rewfiz Bey was not at home. Peterman returned to his house.

The emptiness of it without Marika appalled him. He sat chewing at his finger-nails all through that hot June day, at the end of which Marika's tongue was protruding from a purplish-black face. Her legs had ceased to twitch like a wounded rabbit's. Five other corpses with swollen features and ghastly protruding tongues hung motionless in the June dusk. Twenty-four hours passed. The knocking was heard again in Peterman's silent house. He was marched down to the barracks. A court-martial condemned him to be shot. But sentence was postponed. His friend the Vali was doing his best for him.

A messenger left Miletos for that part of the coast nearest to Icaros. Thence after hiding in the olive-groves until the moon had waned sufficiently to grant a beneficent darkness earlier in the night, he crossed in a caique and managed to deliver a message to Lieutenant Joe Hoggart.

When John came back from Zea he found a telegram from Icaros:

Regret to inform you Peterman has been sentenced to death for espionage. Have received appeal for representations to be made to the Turkish Government for reprieve. Vali has succeeded in postponing execution, but fears he can do nothing without support. He is already in bad odour with Enver and others and dreads use being made of his efforts on behalf of Peterman. Can you do anything? Feel strongly I have let down Mr Stern over this because he did not want to employ Peterman again and I accept full responsibility. Five messengers employed by Peterman have been hanged, also Peterman's housekeeper Marika. Earnestly hope you can bring pressure to bear. Await instructions. Believe Vali can postpone sentence for at least fortnight but cannot count on longer. Letter from Constantinople to Pandermas redirected from Pandermas to Miletos was intercepted by Turkish censor and secret writing discovered. Pre-

sumably information was about naval air-raid from agent sent from Salonika. Please do your best.

John telegraphed to Adelphi Terrace asking Wade to help in any way he could to interest the Foreign Office on Peterman's behalf, even to the extent of offering the release of a highly placed prisoner of war in exchange.

Two days later he received the following reply.

Foreign Office do not feel they can intervene on Peterman's behalf They appreciate that he is a British subject but point out that he understood the risks he ran They know of no precedent for offering to exchange a prisoner of war against a convicted spy

From the Vice-Admiral to whom John had also appealed he received an equally discouraging reply

The shock of the disaster to the *Whinchat* had left John's mind dry and empty. He was feeling that unless he could somehow master this dryness and fill this emptiness he should not remain sane much longer. The concentration of his will on the achievement of the impossible task of saving Peterman's life began to seem the only way he could keep himself from going mad.

"Peterman must be saved. Peterman must be saved. Peterman must be saved," he reiterated over and over again to James Yarrow. "I promised Stern I would look after him. He didn't want us to use him for these new agents. The Admiral insisted on checking the information of Number Twenty-six. Blast him, blast him! And when I ask him to help that poor devil he can do nothing. And blast the Foreign Office! Good God, James, we've sent six people to their deaths because some optimistic airmen won't admit they may have done less than they claimed, and now this poor devil Peterman must be shot or hanged after working for us more than two and a half years."

"You can't blame yourself, John. You've done all you

could You've already suffered so much that you're losing your sense of proportion about Peterman "

"I tell you if I can't save him I shall wither. To bring life to myself I must save Peterman's life. How, how, how, how?"

"I'm afraid that's too stiff a problem for any of us," Yarrow replied

And then suddenly the memory of that last conversation he had had with Emil recurred to John. The Vali of Mileto had told Emil that the two Turkish officers held by us as prisoners of war at Malta since the end of 1914 were great friends of Enver Pasha, such friends that a threat to them would save himself should he ever find intrigue too powerful. A plan began to form in his dry and empty mind, to grow like a green date-palm in the desert of his mind. Emil had gone into Mileto secretly and by night. He too would go into Mileto, but neither secretly nor by night.

To Malta he telegraphed:

Will you try to obtain authorization for urgent despatch here of Afid Bey and Kawal Bey two Turkish officers captured at end of 1914 stop anxious to interrogate them on important matter which I prefer not to mention at present stop do not know what arrangements have been made to replace Whinchat but hope you can have the men sent here earliest possible moment stop

Personal to Colonel Combermere

This is a matter of life and death do your best

And Malta replied:

Men you ask for being sent in Pimpernel Should reach Lipsia day after to-morrow

Personal to Lieut-Commander Ogilvie

We have just heard here of your loss when Whinchat was sunk Malta friends send deep sympathy

Two evenings later H M sloop *Pimpernel* reached Lipsia, and Sowerby the skipper, a genial stalwart after the style of his peer in the *Snapdragon*, reported at the old Turkish Consulate that they had a couple of birds on board for John

"I may want them for forty-eight hours. Can you give me forty-eight hours?" John asked

"I blew off as soon as I got these birds on board. The longer you keep 'em the better I'll be pleased. All I was told was I had to bring 'em back. I wasn't told when Anything doing on this island of yours? Any nice girls?"

"Yes, there are some charming girls," John said "Mervyn, you'll look after Commander Sowerby while I'm away"

"Are you going away, sir?"

"I'm going to Icaros"

The boy's face fell

"And you're not taking me on this trip, sir?"

John hesitated

"Well, perhaps I will after all. You and Yarrow Kellaway, will you look after Commander Sowerby? Drive him out to Grazia. Theodore Ladas will give him a good time. And, Brackenbury, you'll take him up to the club. And now," he added, turning to the Captain of the *Pimpernel*, "could you have the two chaps transferred to the *Argo*? Mervyn, you go out to *Catapult* and ask the S N O if *Argo* may proceed to Icaros immediately. Then go on board. I'll come with you if I may, Sowerby."

"Come along"

When Sowerby was in the car John turned back to speak to Yarrow

"James, get hold of two large sacks somewhere and bring them with you down to the yacht"

"Two sacks?"

"Yes, the kind you use in a sack-race"

John's Turkish had not had nearly as much practice as his Greek, and he was glad to find that the two prisoners spoke French fluently. They were men of olivine complexions with black moustaches, and their two and a half years of life in a Malta prison-camp had left them pretty sleek. The prospect of another voyage did not altogether please them. They had been off the sea too long for their stomachs to relish it.

It was close on twelve o'clock on a calm starry night when the *Argo* left Lipsia for Icaros. At three o'clock John went up on the bridge and told Pneumatikos to alter the course slightly and make for the side of Prasino where they had sheltered from the gale on their way from Patmos a couple of months ago. Shortly after seven o'clock in the morning they dropped anchor.

"Mervyn, take one of the boats and get about two barrow-loads of shingle. Pick out sizable stones. James, I want you to walk over with me to see Chrysomali."

It should have been exhilarating to walk over the grassy slopes of that island in the early morning sunlight, for they were still fairly green, and in the hollows the oleanders were covered with their chalky pink blossoms. But John's heart was dryer than the summer herbage.

"Why do you want to see Chrysomali, John?"

"I want to ask his advice about something."

"Queer fellow to ask advice of."

"I'm in a very queer state, James."

But when they came over the brow within sight of Chrysomali's house on the opposite hillside they saw in the harbour below a motor-launch flying the White Ensign.

"Mackay with M L 926," he announced. "We'll go down to the shore in that case."

The red-bearded skipper welcomed them heartily, but John noticed how Yarrow took him aside and how after that Mackay ceased to make jokes.

"Why, yesterday *Bloodhound* came and took the laird of this place away A proper old Highlandman."

"Did he resist?"

"No, he didn't exactly resist, but he pulled a gun and started shooting up the family pictures till he was disarmed Rum fellow, I thought he was a bit touched"

"They've sent him to Salonica, I suppose?"

"I expect so They've left four Joeys with a corporal in charge of the house, and I've orders to make this my base until further orders Gosh, there's some good fruit in the garden Sub and I are sitting pretty. Where are you going, Ogilvie?"

"Mackay, if you should see *Argo* steering an easterly course for Icaros don't fash yourself. I know what I'm doing"

"But if you steer east from here you'll steer right into the Gulf of Mileto."

"Yes, I want to have a look at those small islands which lie across the neck of the Gulf."

"But you might hit a field of mines anywhere round there"

"We don't draw enough water to hit mines," said John

"I wouldn't trust Johnny Turk to moor his mines at a Christian depth," Mackay protested

"Well, that will be our funeral Anyway, don't you come steaming after us when you see us steaming east I'm serious You'll spoil my whole game if you do"

Mackay shook his head, and asked John whether bacon and eggs would suit him for breakfast

"We can't stop to breakfast We're pushing off as soon as we get back to the yacht So long, Mackay And don't let them knock Chrysomali's place about too much He may have been in communication with U-boats, but he was hospitable to us, and the poor chap will be unhappy enough away from his island."

Mackay walked along toward the valley from which they would cross the island

"Here, old man," he said, squeezing John's arm "I'm awful sorry about this business of yours I can't say more than that There's so little a man can say "

"Thanks I won't make you fag any farther, Mackay "

The skipper of the M L. saw that John wished to talk no more, and turned back toward the little harbour

"What's this about those islands, John?" Yarrow asked

"I'm going to take *Argo* into the harbour of Mileto "

"What?"

"I'm not mad, James I've thought it all out carefully It's quite simple. But I don't want you and Mervyn to feel you've got to come I'll call back for you here "

"If you go we shall go Besides, you'll never make *Pneumatikos* go into Mileto without us to support you "

"Yes, I'd thought of that But there is just enough risk to make me doubtful of taking you both "

"But what's your idea, John? What's your plan?"

"It's based on the curiosity of human nature "

"Well, that's certainly a safe foundation on which to build," Yarrow admitted.

"The stones Mervyn has gathered I propose to put into the two sacks you got and then invite the two Turks to step inside them I shall truss them up and put them in the bows on either side of the Maxim The entrance to Mileto harbour is very narrow, and the soldiers on the fortified headland to starboard and on the fortified islet to port will be able to see with their own eyes the extraordinary spectacle of two befezed gentlemen in sacks in the bows of a small yacht flying the Blue Ensign They will observe that neither the three-pounder gun astern nor the Maxim forrard has been uncovered This small yacht will enter the harbour in broad daylight Whatever her purpose in going in she cannot hope to get out if they

wish to stop her getting out. Curiosity will prevent their firing because if they sink her they will never know what her intentions were. There are no Turkish ships of war in Mileto apart from an old tinpot gunboat. So they will know this small yacht cannot be planning any hostile act which would make the certain destruction of it worth while."

"And then what?"

"When we are safely in the harbour we shall drop anchor and I shall be rowed ashore and ask the first officer I meet to show me the way to the house of the Vali with whom I have important business. Curiosity will get the better of this officer's discretion, and he will show me the way to the Vali's house. To the Vali I shall say that I have in weighted sacks the living bodies of Afid Bey and Kawal Bey and ask him to let the military commandant know that at the slightest sign of offensive action the living bodies of the two Turkish officers—both intimate friends of Enver Pasha—will be dropped into the harbour. When he has communicated that warning to the commandant I shall ask whether Enver esteems more highly Afid or Kawal. When I hear which it is I shall offer him the other Turk in return for the living body of Mr Henry Peterman. If he accepts my offer, which I have every reason to suppose he will, as soon as Peterman is safely on board either Afid or Kawal will be handed over to his fellow-countrymen and *Argo* will leave the harbour of Mileto with Enver's more highly esteemed friend still in his sack. No doubt the Vali will take steps to secure us a safe withdrawal."

"And suppose he refuses to exchange Peterman and the shore batteries sink us?"

"It's so very improbable, James, that I don't think the alternative is worth bothering about. The real gamble is with the forts at the entrance as we go in. But you'll agree that curiosity is almost bound to get the better of alarm."

However, I realize there must be a slight risk, and it's not reasonable to expose you and Mervyn to that risk "

"But you're exposing Pneumatikos and Bowes and the rest of the crew."

"But I'm convinced there is no risk "

"Anyway, risk or not, it's obvious Mervyn and I must come. You'll want somebody responsible on board while you see the Vali, and I *think* you'll want some support when you announce your intention to Pneumatikos "

James Yarrow was right John's theory of human curiosity made no impression at all on the fat Captain. He wheezed and whooped and displayed more activity of gesture in argument for ten minutes than he had displayed in all the miles *Argo* had voyaged under his guidance.

Finally John took him aside and told him that unless he steered the yacht on the course he was ordered he would have to proceed immediately to Mudros where he would be placed under arrest.

"But before we ever reach the neck of the Gulf," Pneumatikos protested, "the coastal batteries will fire on us "

"Well, will you take one risk?" John asked.

"What risk is that?"

"A very slight one. If any shell from the coastal batteries at the entrance to the Gulf drops within three hundred yards of us I will agree to your putting the yacht about. But if the batteries too far away to be clear what exactly we are shoot as wide as my experience of coastal batteries leads me to believe they will shoot, will you accept that as a sign that we are to carry on? Look here, Pneumatikos, I'm not going to threaten you with arrest. If you won't go I don't think I'm entitled by the terms of our agreement to make you go. But won't you go to save a man's life?"

Pneumatikos hesitated, and wheezed away to himself for a minute.

"All right, I will go if the crew will obey my orders "

"The crew will obey your orders, Captain Pneumatikos "

And from that moment the fat Captain was determined to prove that John's remark was justified

The Turkish prisoners protested volubly against being put in the weighted sacks, but they had to submit

"I don't want to raise their hopes of freedom," said John "After all they may go to the bottom "

"John," Yarrow asked sharply, "you don't *want* the enterprise to go wrong?"

"No, James, I've not thought out an elaborate method of suicide. I want to save one man's life Stern took a much greater risk than we are taking when he made his way into Mileto alone I pledged my word to Stern I wouldn't let Peterman down "

"But suppose they seize you in Mileto?"

"In that case I suppose both our Turks would go free. And yet I don't know, I'd as lief be a prisoner of war in Turkey as anything else at present "

By this time the *Argo* was within five miles of the southerly headland behind which the Gulf began to narrow rapidly There was a flash. Two miles ahead of them the sea spouted. A second or two later there was a dull boom.

"Coastal batteries opening fire, sir," Mervyn Iredale called from the bows

"Thanks It's fairly obvious," said John.

He went up on the bridge and stood beside Pneumatikos

"Not a very good shot, Captain," he observed.

Another flash Another fountain Another dull boom.

"Keep steering on the course for another mile, Captain"

The great coast of Asia somehow made the gun insignificant. Several more shots were fired, but none came

within a half mile With propinquity more and more majestic grew that mighty coast

"Now I think we might steer north "

The nearest fountain spouted a quarter of a mile away

"Not within three hundred yards, Captain," said John

"I shall not turn back now, Commander," Pneumatikos replied

And something in the fat man's confidence communicated itself to everybody on board so that when Iredale sang out from the bows that they were passing over mines there was no panic

"Dead slow now," John ordered

And crawling through the jade-green water above the sand running down from the islets at the narrowing neck of the Gulf they could watch the great black sea-urchins of iron swaying beneath them in the hardly perceptible tide.

"I hope to goodness they *are* all moored at the prescribed depth," said Yarrow.

"Well, we're over them now, anyway," said John "Look at the excitement in the fort on the headland to starboard It's like that day we came into Port Hiero and they flew black-and-yellow flags at us "

And then a bitterness of silence came over him, for he was thinking how Zoe was still alive on that light-hearted day.

The dragon-green, the luminous, the dark, the serpent-haunted sea . . .

On the fortified islet to port the confusion and excitement was like a disturbed ant-hill The Turkish soldiers in their coarse greenish khaki the colour of boggy moorland stopped running about and stared at the small grey ship, at the Blue Ensign, at the canvas-covered guns, but most of all at the two fezes above the sacks To starboard the soldiers on the headland forts were equally still Officers were staring down through their glasses, though

so near was the *Argo* and so slowly was she moving that the glasses were superfluous

"Curiosity wins, James "

"I only hope there are no German officers in command "

"They'll be just as curious," said John

the luminous, the dark, the serpent-haunted sea

There was no news yet of her body How long was it before death came? Insensibility first Perhaps like going off under gas or ether Or had she cried out in agony? Did the soul live? Could she see him now? Could she know the desert of his mind?

the dark, the serpent-haunted sea

The huddled white houses . the minarets and cypresses three years ago he had been here in time of peace he had not met Zoe then

"Drop the anchor "

Save for a few merchantmen that seemed to be rotting away on their moorings the harbour was empty In the last report from Miletos it had been mentioned that half of the interned crews of those merchantmen were already dead Death . death death

"Lower the boat "

John went down the ladder and was rowed to the quay On the head of the steps stood an officer. In halting Turkish John explained that he had an important communication to make to the Vali and asked to be escorted to his house The officer stared from the boat to the yacht John looked round and saw what a strange picture the two prisoners made Like red geraniums growing in oil-jars

"Afid Bey and Kawal Bey," he said, hoping their names would convey something to the officer Apparently they did, for he beckoned to John to get out of the boat and step ashore

It was a procession in a dream, that walk to the Vali's house. John felt like a kite with a tail of children He was unaware of walking, but seemed to be carried along by the

escorting officer. He was vaguely conscious of staring natives in the doors of their shops. He looked at his watch. It was noon. He glanced round over his shoulder to see if *Argo* was still there. He would not have been surprised to find her vanished as unsubstantial objects vanish in a dream. The officer was asking him if he had been at Gallipoli. He was telling him that he had been. The officer was saying that it was a pity the English and the Turks were fighting one another. Did John think the war would last much longer? John said it would last as long as the nations fighting against England foolishly supposed they had a chance of winning such a struggle. The officer looked about him to note if he could be overheard. When he decided that he was inaudible he told John that it was high time the war did come to an end.

The Vali's house lay back from the quay in a large cypress-shaded garden. The officer accompanied him into the cool arcaded entrance-hall, and as far as the Vali's reception room.

"You wish to speak to me, monsieur?" Rewfiz Bey asked in French.

"Oui, Excellence"

The Vali invited the officer to wait in the hall until the interview was finished, and he withdrew.

"You will drink a cup of coffee, monsieur? I'm afraid that your blockade has not improved the quality of our coffee, but such as it is . . ." he clapped his hands. A small metal-covered table was set beside John, coffee was brought. And rose jam.

"And now, monsieur, what is your business?" asked the slim dark man in a frockcoat and fez.

"Peterman," John replied.

The Vali spread his white hands in a gesture of helplessness.

"Once upon a time, Excellency, you told Mr Stern that if you should ever find yourself in difficulties with the

authorities now in power you might be helped by the fact that we hold Afid Bey and Kawal Bey as prisoners of war "

The Vali inclined his head.

"You have no view of the harbour from your house?"

John asked

"None, monsieur "

"It is a pity, because I could have shown you Afid Bey and Kawal Bey in the bows of the steam yacht *Argo*."

"*On m'a dit*," the Vali murmured

"Which of the two men would Enver Pasha welcome back here more gratefully?"

The heavy lids drooped over the Vali's dark almond eyes as he looked at his visitor.

"Either would be welcome to Enver Either . . . or . . . both?"

"*Tous les deux*," was what he actually said, and saying it his voice and eyebrows rose in a question.

John shook his head

"It must be one or the other," he pressed.

"Perhaps Kawal . . . but indeed it is immaterial," the Vali murmured

"Then I will exchange Afid Bey for Peterman," John offered. "Kawal will remain with us as a safeguard Not because I distrust your Excellency's good faith," he added quickly, "but because I should like your Excellency to be perfectly sure that the commandant of the garrison will respect the civil authority. In time of war soldiers are so apt to exaggerate their own importance."

The Vali assented to this with a gesture.

"And any attempt to seize the yacht would involve the certain death of Kawal Bey, so heavily weighted is the sack in which he is tied up. The sack will appeal to the Commandant's fancy. He will remember the old method for disposing of faithless wives in the Bosphorus "

"And if Mr Peterman is handed over to you . . ." he

looked down at John's visiting-card "Commander Ogilvie, I can offer the hospitality of my house to Afid Bey?"

"You have my word for that I will admit that my original intention was to demand Peterman by threatening to drop both my prisoners overboard. For various reasons I have changed my mind. The chief reason is that I did not feel justified in sacrificing the lives of those who have brought the *Argo* into Mileto. Your Excellency will appreciate my anxiety to save Peterman's life when I tell you that this exchange of prisoners is being effected entirely on my own responsibility. It will probably involve me in a court-martial."

"Your soldiers are as stupid as ours, eh?"

"I don't think we should confine stupidity to soldiers. I think a state of war conduces to universal stupidity. And what else would you expect? The mere fact of going to war is an admission of the power of stupidity."

The Vali rose and went across to a writing-desk. When he had sealed the envelope he clapped his hands. Presently a servant ushered in the officer who had escorted John up from the quay. To him the Vali gave the envelope, bidding him take it to the Commandant.

"Within an hour I think Mr Peterman will be here," the Vali said to John. "Shall we go into the garden for awhile?"

He led the way out, and after walking along an avenue of immense cypresses they passed through a gate into a walled courtyard where a fountain was playing above a pool in which goldfish were swimming. A bronzy moss had covered the low stone parapet round it. Orange-scarlet dragon-flies darted and hovered above the water, on the surface of which floated the orange-scarlet blossoms of a gnarled pomegranate-tree growing near. An ancient Aleppo pine shielded the fountain-court from the midday sun.

The Vali offered his guest a chair. A servant brought sweet cakes and fruit, sherbet and rose jam.

"Your Excellency does not remember meeting me three years ago when I was staying here with my friend Emil Stern?"

"But certainly!" exclaimed the Vali, looking at John with a cordial smile. "How stupid of me! You see, you are right. The war has by now made me so stupid that I do not remember those whom I have met. A thousand pardons. And our friend Stern? I hear he is no longer Consul in Icaros."

"No, he has been transferred to Stockholm. I congratulate your Excellency on the accuracy of your information."

The Vali shrugged his shoulders.

"A man of great ability, Mr. Stern. I have been deprived of much by the war, and among those deprivations I felt particularly the deprivation of his company. Yes, for me the war has been a disaster," Rewfiz sighed. "And the longer it continues the more disastrous it is likely to be. Turkey was already changing rapidly. The change will now be still more rapid. Indeed, I cannot discern the end of it."

"I might tell you that I know about the matter which was discussed by you and Stern when he visited you last year."

"Ah, you know about that?" the Vali exclaimed, his dark almond eyes lightening. "Then we can speak frankly. There is no further interest in the proposal which was then discussed?"

"I'm afraid not. If there were a landing anywhere it would be at Alexandretta."

John had been entrusted to keep this threat to Alexandretta alive. The fear of it immobilized a certain number of Turkish troops, which was of advantage to the campaign in Palestine.

"There was a slight disagreement about the terms," the Vali sighed.

"So I believe A little matter of a million pounds "

"I don't think the amount of bribing I should have had to do was quite appreciated," said the Vali in tones of gentle reproach. "And every movement of mine is watched."

"You would have known Chrysomalı Bey?" John asked

"I knew him well. Have you any news of him?"

"He has been expelled from Prasino "

"I had not heard that . yet," the Vali murmured "Poor Chrysomalı But eccentrics cannot survive war," said the Vali. "Chrysomalı should have adjusted himself to the time. I don't know how he escaped during the war with Greece, for he was completely out of sympathy with modern Greece. And his belief that a paramount Germany would preserve what he cherished was a pathetic illusion A victory of Germany in this war would be a disaster for the whole world "

"Such a victory is unimaginable," said John.

"Of that fortunately for myself I am convinced. Otherwise I should view my own future with despair You are not a professional sailor, I presume?"

"No, I am a dramatist "

"Indeed? Ah, how much I should like to be going to some theatre in Paris to-night I was for a time at our Embassy there as well as at St James's. Are you well acquainted with the French stage?"

"Tolerably," John replied

Here in Mileto he had written the first act of the play he had planned for Gabrielle about Mary Queen of Scots. Should he ever write another play? At this moment the necessary condition of mind was far more unimaginable than a German victory in the war Something in the tone of his voice when he replied to the Vali's question about the French stage must have communicated his feeling of remoteness, for his host fell into a reverie, and they both

sat listening to the fountain as if they had both become abruptly aware that they were interrupting music by their conversation.

"This pool of goldfish is my retreat from war," said the Vali presently. "I find the effortless motion of fish a sedative for irritated nerves"

. . . overboard

*Into the tumbling billows of the main,
Lord, lord! methought what pain it was to drown.
What dreadful noise of water in mine ears!
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wracks;
A thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon.
and often did I strive
To yield the ghost but still the envious flood
Stopt in my soul, and would not let it forth
To find the empty, vast, and wandering air;*

*I passed, methought, the melancholy flood,
With that grim ferryman which poets write of,
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night*

The slim fountain was whispering to John these words of the tormented Clarence, whispering them with gentle plash as it swayed in the sunlight with rainbow breath

"You are feeling the heat too much here," the Vali exclaimed anxiously.

"No, no, it is deliciously cool by this fountain And tranquil too Tranquil as a lacquered screen gold-fish and dragon-flies and pomegranate flowers *tout est lacqueur, ces poissons rouges, ces libellules, ce grenadier*"

Pomegranate grenades once upon a time Pineapple bombs in this war. Oh yes, it would be good now to be turned into lacquer, to be melted like sealing-wax, and

allowed to cool and harden into a perpetual orange-scarlet immobility. And since the motion of these dragon-flies and goldfish was so regular and persistent that out of motion it achieved immobility they might dart and swim for ever while he in lacquer watched them

It wanted Flecker to preserve this fountain courtyard in the lacquer of a poem Dead now in Switzerland, poor Flecker! A pity the consumption had not waited long enough to give him a chance to see the war through out here. *This fell sergeant, Death, is strict in his arrest* Flecker would almost certainly have been Vice-Consul in one of those islands off the coast Good to fetch Flecker in the *Argo* and tire the sun with talking and send him down the sky, *And now thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest, a handful of grey ashes* ὁσσάκις ἀμφότεροι ἥλιον ἐν λέσχῃ κατεδύσαμεν, ξεῖν' Ἀλικαρνασσεῦ Yes, Flecker and he might have walked together beneath the Coan plane-tree and looked across to Halicarnassus and conjured Queen Artemisia from the mists of the morning If they could talk of Samarcand in a Soho restaurant as they had talked that day five years ago, before he had gone to America, what talk might they not have had here!

"Yes, I am glad, very glad, Commander Ogilvie, that you have given me an opportunity to help poor Mr Peterman. I could not have postponed the sentence much longer. It was too clear a case, and it would have given my enemies another excuse to represent me as a lover of France and England Ah, what a disaster this war is! What a disaster!"

John was reminding himself that it was his business to take advantage of the occasion to ascertain all he could from the Vali of the real state of affairs in Turkey Obviously Rewfiz Bey was in a communicative mood which with the encouragement of a tactful question here and there might have provided him with more valuable and

authentic information than a dozen agents. But he could not bring himself to the pitch of such cleverness, and from this house he should bring away nothing except the whisper of a slim fountain rising and falling and leaving upon the air an iridescent spray light as breath

At last a servant approached, and the Vali led the way back between the rust-red trunks of the great cypresses into the house

There in the Vali's reception-room John saw the man whose life he could feel he had saved. Peterman was always gaunt, but the anxiety of the last days had shrunk what little spare flesh he had and his grey flannel suit seemed to be hanging on a skeleton.

"I've come to take you away," John announced.

"Tank God for dat, sir "

This was all he said, as he stood there chewing at the ragged ends of his drooping black moustache

The Vali had ordered his carriage.

"I think my friend Afid will be glad to drive," he suggested

Then he shook hands with John, and dismissed Peterman with a wave of his white hand

The officer who had escorted John from the quay drove down with them in the closed landau which was drawn by a pair of black horses

"Did you bring no luggage, Peterman?" John asked.

"Not a scrap. I wouldn't have gone back to my house for a fortune," he replied emphatically

The expression on Kawal's face when he saw Afid being helped into the boat and no sign of being set free himself nearly made John give an order to release him too, but he restrained his charity

"I forgot to ask his Excellency," he said to the Turkish officer, "to tell the Commandant to telephone to the forts at the entrance to the Gulf not to fire on us. Should we

by any chance be sunk it would be impossible to save the life of Kawal Bey."

The Turkish officer saluted and promised to telephone to the outer forts himself

It was five o'clock when the *Argo* entered the harbour of Chora in Icaros John sent Peterman ashore to talk matters over with Joe Hoggart and went over to the *Snapdragon*

"Hullo, old man," Trehawke bellowed as he came alongside "I haven't seen you for weeks Here, you must think me a pig for not writing you a chit of congratulation and all that, but I thought you'd have been here before this."

"You didn't hear about the *Whinchat*?"

"I heard the *Whinchat* was gone, yes And a lot of lives lost. The brute must have hit her forrard. You take it badly forrard and you're gone in two minutes That's what happened to the *Arcadia* in April."

"You didn't hear that the Gadrilakis family with Helena Roussos and her brother were travelling to the Piræus in the *Whinchat*?"

"No, but surely none of them was lost?"

"All of them "

"Your girl was drowned?"

"Yes "

The Cornishman sank down in an armchair

"My dear old man . . . this is . . . this is . . . "

"I know. Don't let's talk about it I only wanted to stop your congratulations. What I've come to say is we've just been into Mileto with *Argo*."

"What?"

Trehawke looked at him anxiously.

"No, I'm not mad."

John related what had happened

"Here, I say, I didn't mean to have a drink, but you won't mind if I do? Will you have one?"

"I'll have a brandy "

"Oh, good work! Look here, there'll be the deuce of a row about this "

"I don't care You don't suppose I want to stay out here any longer, do you?"

"They may have a court-martial "

"Let them," said John. "The only thing that's worrying me is Sowerby. He can't get into any trouble, can he, for bringing two prisoners of war to Lipsia and returning with one?"

"Old Acid-Drop won't get into trouble In fact I don't see how anybody can except you They'll strafe you all right, though Buzfuz will turn as blue as an Early Briton "

"Why should he turn blue?" exclaimed John. "It's his fault we had to go If he hadn't wanted to check up on his airmen we shouldn't have got all these wretched fellows hanged. Besides, they weren't *his* prisoners. I think Combermere may feel a bit sore, but he's such a good chap that he'll forgive me Anyway, as I tell you, I don't care a damn what happens to me."

"That's always in your favour when strafing begins," Trehawke admitted

And the Cornishman was right When the news of the way John had violated the decencies of civilized warfare by exchanging a prisoner of war of high rank for a convicted spy reached London the cipherers at the Bureau were kept busy for hours decoding protests, threats, rebukes, reprimands, and idiotic questions John's invariable reply to threats of a court-martial was a telegram expressing his pleasure at the prospect and his earnest hope that the court-martial would be held as soon as possible as he was anxious to return to civil life. He had only one difficult interview, and that was with the Vice-Admiral

"Do you realize the *Argo* might have been sunk?"

"Well, sir, she does not fly the White Ensign "

"But I'm responsible for the damned yacht and you're responsible to me for what you do with it "

"Yes, sir, but the Bureau would have to pay for her "

"Look here, Ogilvie, I've heard all about this tragic business of yours, and I make allowances for that "

John stiffened

"I desire no excuses to be made for my action on that account "

"But do you realize that the Foreign Office have asked *me* for an explanation for abusing prisoners of war? *Me* They've asked *me* "

"Well, sir, if you'd been shut up in Malta for two and a half years you wouldn't mind being tied up in a sack for a few hours if you had your freedom at the end of it "

"Don't bring *me* into it, Ogilvie I will *not* be brought into it. That's what I object to The infernal way you've involved *me* in this business "

"I'm extremely sorry, sir, but I should have thought that even all these people in London could have realized my action was taken without permission from you "

"I shall hold a court of enquiry into your behaviour "

"That is for you to decide, sir. I have given you all the facts. Except one "

"Oh, and what's that? "

"Before Peterman was arrested he had received by a different route information from another of the agents sent in by us That information said at least one direct hit *had* been registered on the *Goeben*, and that it would be at least two months before the battle cruiser would be seaworthy "

"There you are! What did I tell you? "

"You were right, sir "

"Of course I was right Yes, well if you hadn't got this fellow Peterman out we shouldn't have had that piece of information "

"No, sir, it would have died with him," John said coldly.

"Quite Quite Well, I may be able to use this information as an argument in your favour, Ogilvie "

John wanted to tell the Admiral how little he cared what he did with the information or how much he exerted himself on his behalf, but he had no heart to puzzle him any further by adopting an attitude he could never understand

"When' do you propose to hold the court of enquiry, sir?"

"I shall do nothing further. This business will probably blow over presently You'd better stay and have some tea "

So Peterman remained in Icaros, and John was not recalled At the end of a fortnight his violation of the decencies of civilized warfare passed into that limbo which held so many violations of the decencies of civilized warfare

The last word was a personal telegram from Captain Wade, who had given no sign of his existence while the strafe was in progress

Think all quiet on the Western Front now Glad you got P out but don't do it again

"And I'm still here, James And they haven't found her body And for god's sake, James, tell that obese lump Vampas not to walk on tip-toe whenever he comes into my room I know he's sympathetic, but it maddens me when people try to show it by walking on tip-toe or lowering their voices when they speak to me And why can't I dream of her, James? Not once have I spoken to her in sleep during these three weeks "

Yarrow glanced at John

"Could you bear to see Hinks this afternoon? He's just come over from his island."

"Yes, yes, I'll see him "

Hinks was the little Cockney bank-clerk whom Wade

had sent out soon after the occupation of Lipsia and who had been ruling successfully one of the largest of the Cyclades ever since Hinks had been pink when he arrived in Greece, but the sun had by now burnt his small round face to a savage crimson on which the peeled skin resembled sugar forming on jam.

"All going well, Hinks?"

"Yes, sir All going to rights Excuse me, sir, but I've come over to see you on rather a delicate personal matter I know you don't like being bothered with telegrams and such-like, so I thought I'd take the chance of the *Argo* being on her rounds and nip over myself "

"I'm afraid there's no news yet of your being made a lieutenant," said John

"No, sir, it wasn't that I was worrying about It's—it's—well, sir, really I find it very difficult to put the matter before you "

"No trouble, I hope?"

"No, sir, no trouble Rather the reverse in fact Oh, yes, everything on the island is going well The recruiting for the army has gone well The port-control is in nice order now In fact I think I could call it very nice order The bread hasn't been too good "

"The bread has been very bad here," said John.

"Lot of grit in it and what you might call foreign bodies Straw and such-like. But still there you are, war's war That's what I tell 'em when there's any grumbling. Polemos eeny polemos I'm getting on good—getting on well with my Greek No, sir, there's no trouble at all "

Hinks paused, and brushed back his bleached hair in perplexity.

"Well, sir, I'm really ashamed to mention it, but there's a sort of town-hall on the island Demarchion, they call it And it's rather a special kind of a demarchion because all these rich shipowners . rich islanders, I mean, they've added a lot here and there and dossed it up all round and

now they've come to me and asked if I'd have my portrait painted and . . .”

“They don't want to hang it up in the town-hall, do they?” John asked with a smile

“Well, sir, I'm afraid that's just what they do want,” Hinks announced apologetically “I can see the comical side of it, but they really are serious And what I'd like to know is if such a thing could be allowed They've got a painter in the island, and the idea is to paint me and then hang my phiz up in the demarchion Oh, undoubtedly it is what you'd call a bit of a cheek on my part, coming to ask you if such a proceeding is possible, but they've been very kind to me on the island and I didn't want to hurt their feelings if it could be avoided. Well, sir, that's how the matter stands”

“I see no reason at all why you should object, Hinks”

“Oh, I don't object, sir. In fact I'm fond of the island, and when the time comes to leave it,—all good things do come to an end as they say—I'd like to think of myself hanging up there in the demarchion and keeping in touch with 'em all, in a manner of speaking, because they really are a very nice set of chaps No, sir, as far as I'm concerned I'd like it, but the way I look at it is what will other people think”

“I don't see where other people come into it,” John said. “You've handled the island tactfully and efficiently. I'm delighted to hear your subjects are appreciative. Certainly accept this offer I'm proud an officer of mine should have had such a tribute paid to him.”

It was impossible for Hinks to blush because no blush could have been potent enough to suffuse with a richer hue the permanent crimson of his complexion, but his eyes lighted up with pleasure at John's words

“Then I have your permission, sir, to tell them to carry on with this portrait?”

"You have. And I will write and let Captain Spicer know how well you have done. He'll be as pleased as I am."

"It's very kind of you, sir. And there's one other thing, sir. I hope you won't think I did wrong, but it was a question of saying 'yes' right away or saying 'yes' too late if I waited for the authorization from Kellaway. When Mr Venizelos came back to Athens and the blockade was raised I took it upon myself to suspend for a week the permits to caiques and trading-vessels between the island and the mainland so as they could get their stuff over quickly and obtain the top price. I can honestly say that none of our boats can be suspected of having any truck with the enemy or with the Royalists, and I knew it would mean a good deal of money which is badly wanted. I hope you won't consider I took too much upon myself?"

"You did exactly what I should like every officer who is administering port-control to do," said John. "You knew when a rule should be broken. Of course, if one of your boats got into trouble *you* would be blamed. But no doubt you realized that?"

"Certainly, sir. That's only right. But they won't any of them get into trouble," Hinks declared confidently.

"I've perfect trust in your judgment."

"Well, sir, it's a pleasure to work under a man who sees so quick what's what. And now, sir, if you'll excuse me I'd like to be getting back. I only nipped over for a couple of minutes as you might say."

"Right. There's nothing to keep you, Hinks. Carry on with the good work. I hope the likeness will be a speaking one. Then your countenance will still be preaching common sense in that demarchion when you are back again in London at the bank."

When he was back again in London at the bank, John

pondered after Hinks had hurried away Hinks would have had his glorious hour of crowded life when at the end of the war he resumed the track of ordinary existence. What an admirable bank-manager he would make! Yet would his directors appreciate the qualities he had had opportunity to ripen out here? Would they reward his willingness to assume responsibility and that sane belief in his own judgment? Or was he doomed to spend the rest of his life fighting against people who preferred an age without a name and cycles of Cathay? Probably But his experience in Greece would have provided him with such a contempt for dullardry that surely his soul was safe now John pictured Hinks in some small country town trying to do his best for the farmers and the shopkeepers and professional men perplexed with the problems of their overdrafts There would be many an evening when he would be feeling depressed because he was unable to help where a trifle of financial help at the right moment would mean the difference between a man's happiness and a man's misery, and on such evenings his thoughts would carry him back to his Aegean island and the memory of how once upon a time he had been able to help at the right moment without fear of being rebuked for excess of initiative or imprudent generosity He would think of his portrait in naval uniform hanging on the walls of that marble demarchion, think of himself commemorated in the same spirit as poets and statesmen and warriors had been commemorated. He might be sitting down on a foggy November evening to cold mutton in the dining-room of the Bank House, his hair thinning, his paunch and chin fattening, but over on the other side of Europe the last rosy-violet flush of the Aegean sunset would be irradiating the florid youthful countenance of Assistant-Paymaster Percy Glover Hinks R N V R, whose companions were Alcibiades and Alexander, Don John of Austria, Byron, and Rupert Brooke

That half-way through that burning July John went down with amœbic dysentery was attributed by Doctor Vampas to the amount of extra work he had insisted on doing at night, aggravated by the deterioration in the quality of the bread obtainable in Lipsia, which was in fact more like road sweepings than bread.

"First every afternoon when all take a siesta you must work in the Bureau. That was bad. Then every evening you begin to work. And then every night. That was impossible. On your debilitated system this bread . . ."

"Oh, don't tell me what brought it on," John interrupted wearily. "Give me something to stop the pain of this blasted neuritis. I don't mind the dysentery if I can crawl along to the apópatos. Forty-one times yesterday which is not bad for a diet of boiled rice. However, I think I shall beat that score to-day. What's the time?"

"Four o'clock, Commander."

"Yes, well I've been thirty-three times since midnight. Even if I only go every half-hour until midnight I shall score forty-nine. Pretty good, eh, Doctor?"

Dr Vampas shook his head gravely, and bent over the needle he was sterilizing. The smell of lighted methylated spirit combined with carbolic in a nauseating odour associated as it was with the retching that inevitably followed these morphine injections when a rival malady dragged him up from a prostrate attitude to obey its ruthless demands on the body.

The worst pain of the neuritis was subdued in five days, but the fight against that deprived John of the last of what vitality was left from the toll of the dysentery. When that did not drag him out of bed more than once in an hour he insisted in being left completely alone all day. He had reached the point when death was welcome, and he got into his head that the solicitous company of others was keeping death away from him. Moreover, the consciousness that the work at the Bureau was increasing all

the time and that his illness was keeping him from doing his share made him jealous of any time spent by others on himself

"Besides, I don't want to talk, James. And I don't want to be talked to And I want least of all to lie on my back, aware of people sitting in the room who are carefully not talking A couple of cockroaches are conducting a love affair in this room, and that interests me more than people. The lady lives in that cupboard in the wall, and the gentleman comes to tryst with her from another part of the house Luckily for him he can walk under the door of my room. They meet every afternoon in the middle of the floor and whisper sweet nothings to one another with their antennæ It's so quiet in this room when you are all away that I can hear the gentleman cockroach's dry crackle as he comes under the door"

"You don't feel up to reading?"

"No, James I think I'm going to die, you know. Everything is becoming so exquisitely immaterial."

"Well, if you really *are* going to die I think you ought to read *War and Peace* first"

He produced a green volume of over 1500 pages.

"My dear James, I'm too tired to read more than a few pages at a time, and I shall be dead long before I ever finish *War and Peace*, which might be a disappointment"

"I'll leave the book beside your bed in case you want to read at all By the way you remember that new ink they sent from London?"

"Yes"

"Well, I wrote out the questionnaire on the back of the bits with the maker's name sewn on ties and had them sewn on again."

"Yes?"

"But the fellow who was going to try to get in fell ill and couldn't start last week."

"Yes?"

"I put the ties away in my safe, and this morning when I took them out the ink had come up. Evidently time is the re-agent. It's a good thing the poor devil did fall ill, or he'd have been for it if his baggage had been searched. And we were told this ink was marvellous and would react only to the re-agent they sent us. In my opinion chemists are just as pretentious as anybody else."

With this Yarrow took himself off, and the quiet which John craved wrapped the old Turkish Consulate. Lying on his back he let his mind wander in the labyrinthine blue-and-red pattern of the ceiling in an attempt to reach that landscape in the middle without moving from blue to red or red to blue of those elaborate foliations. For nigh on a century Byron and Ypsilanti, Mavrocordato and Miaoulis, had been fixed there in the four corners of this high ceiling unable to enjoy that landscape painted on the oblong plaque in the middle of the shallow dome. And it was such an innocent scene. The sky was such a simple cobalt. The vegetation had the pathetic greenness of eternal inexperience. The columns of the ruined temple mirrored in the lake might have been taken out of a child's box of bricks. The little white clouds in the sky were like swans and the little swans on the lake were like clouds. It was empty too, this infantine paradise. Was this once the bridal chamber of some Chian refugee who had fled here from the massacre? Had he in gratitude for the secure future that stretched before him caused this ceiling to be painted for the pleasure of his young wife? And when later this house had been bought by the Turkish Government for their consul had his plump wives lolled back behind their latticed balcony and eaten their loukoum and drunk their sweet coffee, wondering what it would be like to wander unveiled in that empty Eden and meet beside that lake some giaour more attractive than their corpulent bureaucratic lord?

The blind flapped in a gust of air that flowed like a

freshet round the room, and as it bellied from where he was lying John caught a glimpse beyond the sea of Rheneia, behind which on Delos not yet two months ago he had sat with Zoe in a landscape more truly paradisaical than that poor painted simulacrum of paradise. And her body had never been found

*What sights of ugly death within mine eyes!
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wracks,
A thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon,
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalu'd jewels,
All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea,
Some lay in dead men's skulls, and in those holes
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept,
As 'twere in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems,
That woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,
And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by*

But Clarence and his dreams would lose their power to haunt him if he could but escape from his own body. And it was losing its hold upon his spirit more surely with every day that passed. If he lifted his arm against the light he could fancy the bones were becoming visible in a transparency of flesh. With every day that passed he seemed to drag a lighter body along the corridor. And afterwards? Was the hope of some free air in which for ever he and his lost love should move in an eternal ecstasy of love a foolish illusion of mortality? Was it in truth no more than such a folly as that landscape in the middle of the ceiling? Would her body be gnawed by fishes, his by worms, and that be the end of both? Were they in ultimate time of no larger significance than those two cockroaches who trysted here every afternoon?

Ah, there he was! The blind had ceased to flap. In the silence he could hear the dry crackle of the gentleman crawling under the door. There he came, sprucing him-

self up for a moment before his ladylove appeared. And then she came from her cupboard in the wall. These two ridiculous insects walking across the great bare floor to meet and stroke one another with their antennæ. Crunch! And they would both be irremediably and utterly dead. We had no doubt of that. We imagined no Elysium for cockroaches. Yet there was evidence of purpose in those two insects. Somewhere back in the kitchen the gentleman-cockroach must have said to himself it was time he was on the way to meet his love, and she in her cupboard must have said, '*he is coming, my own, my sweet*' or whatever some cockroach Tennyson had written for young lovers.

But death would be no less welcome if it brought oblivion. This ache for Zoe would be allayed. This oppressive sense of futility would vanish. And dying now he should die without upsetting anybody. He should leave no responsibilities. Already the success of the Bureau had roused so much jealousy that were he to be eliminated there would be half a dozen feet eager to step into a dead man's shoes. And no doubt there was enough leather in the shoes to cut up into slippers for the eager waiting feet.

The sole responsibility remaining was to read Tolstoi's *War and Peace*. He ought to make an effort. James had been such a joy to him ever since he arrived in Salonica last year. He really owed it to James to start reading *War and Peace*. He put out his arm to feel for the green volume, and in doing so pushed it from the table. The noise of its fall vibrating across the bare boards startled the two cockroaches, and both scuttled off. Never mind, he would have to be dragging himself out of bed presently and he would pick up the book then. It would take more energy than he had to do it now.

Half an hour later John began *War and Peace*, but the effort of holding the book exhausted him before he had read a dozen pages, and he lay back again counting the leaves on those red and blue sprays. It was as much worth

while as anything else to ascertain whether there were more blue leaves or more red leaves

Later that afternoon the Italian officer attached to the Bureau came up with the insignia of the Crown of Italy which had been conferred upon him

"Very pretty," said John, looking at the white and scarlet ribbon. Then feeling that he should try to display gratification he talked about the great Italian victory in Carso and of what a friendly telegram he had received from General Paparazzo in response to his own telegram of congratulations. The liaison officer hoped he would soon have the pleasure of seeing the red and white of the Corona d'Italia beside the red and green of the Croix de Guerre on John's uniform, and that was that

Gradually John found himself sufficiently interested in the book to make the necessary effort to hold it up for longer than a few minutes, and after four or five days so deeply interested that he accepted as a fact his unwillingness to die without finishing the book. He became able to eat boiled chicken as well as rice. In Natasha he found a reminder that youth grows old. And that consoled him. For him Zoe old would be for ever unimaginable. Even blindness might be granted a comparable consolation if one were blinded in youth and grew old oneself, surrounded in fancy by beings changeless as the immortals.

The letters from home, from Miriam, from various friends which he knew contained sympathy had lain unopened since they arrived. He opened them now and read them.

"Poor dears," he thought. "So difficult to write about the loss of somebody they have never seen. I must answer them."

And this responsibility on top of the need to finish *War and Peace* braced him still further. On the last day of that burning July he drove down once again to the Bureau, having finished *War and Peace*.

Perhaps having once made up his mind to go on living, he was inclined to think that the business was at his own disposal. Anyway, the week after he was up and about he was struck down by another go of that fever he had had in Salonica the previous August. This time there was no question of a lassitude out of which almost by his own volition he would fall back into the gentle arms of a lullaby-crooning Death. This time, when after the hours of intermittent delirium he was lying back with a temperature sinking below normal, it was not a question of whether he wanted to die but whether he could manage to live. The pain was atrocious, but the doctors (and these included, besides Vampas and the surgeon of the *Catapult*, a man of some fame in medicine who happened to come into Lipsia in the ship in which he was serving as a temporary sailor) could not give morphia for fear of destroying what little strength he had left to fight the bouts of high fever. To add to his misery he strained himself in twisting under the pain and this brought on an acute cystitis.

The best part of this illness was the fever, for in every delirium he found himself rushing now through a red jungle now through a blue jungle in a desperate endeavour to reach the landscape to which they led, and in that landscape through which he was struggling he would from time to time catch glimpses of Zoe sitting beside that lake. She was waiting there for him, and in the consciousness of that the struggle to reach her possessed a sublime exultation.

"If I can get through this red thicket I'll easily manage the blue thicket beyond," he would shout, tearing at the sheet that covered him.

But always just as he was breaking through the last blue thicket that stood between him and Zoe waiting there for him beside the lake his temperature would drop. The jungle in which he had been struggling gradually

receded and as if waking from a nightmare he would recognize that it was but a painted ceiling and that there was no Zoe waiting for him. And as his heart would seem to be breaking in despair merciful pain would rack his body so savagely that even the loss of Zoe was forgotten in the effort to bear it

"Play your flute, James, play your flute Not because your music is soothing, but because your face makes me laugh, and laugh I must or I shall go mad with this infernal pain "

But even pain stops at last, and one evening in mid-August he fell asleep without it and woke without it in the morning.

"Do you think you'll feel well enough this afternoon to see Theodore Ladas, sir?" Mervyn Iredale asked. "He telephoned to ask "

"Of course I will I'm perfectly all right now."

"While you were ill he had news that his son had been killed at Doiran."

"Oh, poor souls, poor souls," John cried, and in his weakness the tears could not be checked

Euphrosyne came with her father. John was shocked to see how grief had aged Theodore His pointed beard was lank His voice seemed cracked like an old bell. Death had come quickly to Leo when it came He had been shot through the heart by a Bulgarian sniper After they had sat for a while by John's bed Theodore said he had one or two business matters in the town to which he must attend after neglecting everything for sorrow since the news from Salonica had reached him He asked if it would tire John too much to leave Euphrosyne here until he called for her

"I have not seen you, John, since your tragic loss," Euphrosyne said when they were alone.

"I wanted to come to Grazia. But I could not face the memory of that last night in June."

"We understood. And now we understand better still. It is worse for my father. He will never get over it. Time which heals other losses can never heal completely for a father the loss of his only son. I did not say that, John," she added quickly, "with you in mind. I was thinking of Aglaia and myself."

"But you are right," he agreed. "I am not vain and foolish enough to suppose that time will not allay the ache for Zoe. It's difficult to believe as much at the moment, but in due course the war will finish, and I shall leave this island which has given me so much joy and so much grief. My illness even has been a mercy. But you will not leave Lipsia. You will always be aware of an emptiness. I remember so well the very first night I arrived at Grazia being aware how deeply your father still missed your mother. Tell me, Euphrosyne, if you could have foreseen that the death of Leo would be the result of Greece's intervention would you have still desired that Greece should go to war? Or would you have been another Antonia Drimys?"

"Surely such questions are unanswerable, John? We are not granted the vision of Cassandra. I can sincerely reply that I do not regret Greece's entry into the war. The glorious destiny of Hellas in the past has always been dependent on the willingness of the women to sacrifice their personal feelings. Would the mother or wife or daughter of Leonidas have chosen retreat at Thermopylæ?"

"I'm beginning to wonder now whether the world might not be a better place if women had been less willing to sacrifice their personal feelings. May not patriotism be a false god when we worship it with human sacrifices like a Moloch?"

"You only wonder that now because you are weak after your illness, and are heavy at heart from your loss. Surely when we sacrifice to patriotism we sacrifice to the best part of ourselves. What is patriotism except an ideal conception

of a country which expresses all that is best of the individuals who together make it a nation?"

"Yes, but could not that ideal conception be applied to all humanity and thus promote an internationalism too far advanced spiritually to resort to war? I do not think it would have been possible to avoid this war, but I should like to believe that the war to end war is something better than a rhetorical phrase. I'm hoping that England will set an example by a fair treatment of Ireland. I think there are signs of it. They have released most of the prisoners condemned to penal servitude. I believe that Poland may win back her complete independence. And if the Turks are driven out of Europe and pushed back into the interior of Asia where they belong, and whence they should never have been allowed to emerge, why then Greece can be her complete self again. I have great hopes from American intervention. I believe Wilson takes the right view of what has caused the war and as we cannot possibly win without the help of the United States I hope he will be strong enough to impose a just peace on all the rival imperialisms in Europe. I believe that Russia will produce a vigorous new form of genuine democracy. And then the world can settle down to peace, and all that nations and individuals have suffered will have been suffered for the genuine good of mankind. If I could not believe all that I should be back in the delirium of fever from which I have now emerged. I've just been reading Tolstoi's *War and Peace*, and it's all there. Not a situation, not a character which is not recognizable in the present upheaval. The effect of war is always the same. Tolstoi used his experience in the Crimea to write about the Napoleonic invasion of Russia. If he were writing now he could have used that Crimean experience to write just as convincingly of the present war. The difference is merely in degree. In kind it does not change."

"But you speak, John, with the confidence that is the

birthright of one who belongs to a nation which has been a great ruling nation for centuries. We who belong to smaller nations cannot have that confidence. You speak of the oppression of Ireland, but what is that compared to the oppression of Greece by Turkey?"

"Just as bad," said John. "But the English are better at making out a case for themselves than the Turks."

"But such a massacre as Chios," Euphrosyne exclaimed.

"The massacre of Drogheda was just as bad."

"Yes, but how long ago was that?"

"Nearly three hundred years. And the massacre of Chios was nearly a hundred years ago. Time does not alleviate the grief of nations which are only partially free. Great nations will not remember that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children."

"I agree with you, John. And that's why in Greece we cannot feel confidence. Venizelos spoke truly when he said that Greece was too small a country to break her word. We must fight for what we know is ours by right. And we cannot expect to be heard when peace brings a new Europe unless we have proved ourselves to be worthy of what we know is ours by sacrificing the present for the future. When I think of Leo lying dead at Doiran I do not think of my brother as the boy with whom I have played and laughed through childhood, I think of him as a fragment of Hellas won back from the barbarians who have been defiling her for centuries. It is for that he has died. And even your little Zoe, my dear, is a fragment of Hellas. Without war she would not now be dead. But without war you would never have met her. She would have gone her peaceful way, unaware of what it meant to love and be loved by you. You would have gone your peaceful way, unaware of what it meant to love and be loved by her. We human beings want to be like the

gnomon of the sun-dial—how do you say gnomon in English?”

“We use the same word ”

“Yes, like the gnomon which marks only the hours when the sun is shining We forget that time moves just as swiftly in the shade Without war you could not have found your Zoe, and therefore you cannot blame war for losing her My father and I and Aglaia desired Hellas to be herself again We had to give Leo ”

“Do you believe in the immortality of the soul, Euphrosyne?”

“Why, yes ”

“With never a doubt?”

“Never ”

“With a secure faith in that the face of death is no longer white,” John murmured “But can you believe in our desired immortality in which the essence of a man freed from his retarding body continues as himself in Eternity?”

“I would not pin myself down to anything more than a conviction that we are undoubtedly immortal, but I am positive that such immortality cannot be apprehended in terms of this world. That is why I would never, for instance, preoccupy myself with spiritualism because I should be sure that, even were it possible to communicate with the dead, I should be tainting them by such communication, helping in fact to keep them earthbound My idea of purgatory is that in purgatory the soul suffers by being denied that complete freedom from earth to which it aspires, but from which it is kept by its own earthiness. I cannot express myself very well I would find it difficult to say in Greek what I mean To me spiritualism is the gross selfishness of the living It is to carry their possessive feelings into the next world, and gratify themselves at the expense of the dead Religion teaches us to serve the dead by prayer ”

"But if this earth is so hurtful to the dead, why do we concern ourselves whether we hold more or less of it? Why do we kill young men like Leo that his country may have Smyrna or even Constantinople?"

"But, John, that is being deliberately blind. It is not for Smyrna or Constantinople as earth, but for Smyrna and Constantinople as expressions of the Hellenic spirit that our young men give their lives."

"And do you believe that at this moment the soul of Leo is looking down on Dorian and watching the struggle of his companions-in-arms who are still alive?"

"No, for I believe that in dying for his country Leo has perfectly fulfilled his earthly task and that now he is free of earth, free, free."

"And Zoe, do you think she is free? Her body has never been found."

"She too is free," Euphrosyne declared. "And do not torment yourself about her body, my dear. Here earth and sea are equal. She lies with coral as peacefully as beneath the ground."

"The old Greeks did not think that. How many laments were written for those on whose bodies earth could not be sprinkled!"

"Ah, but, John, I think we must allow ourselves to advance beyond ancient superstition."

"I wonder. Why should we suppose that every idea about the dead except that they sleep in eternal oblivion is an ancient superstition?"

"Even if your Zoe sleeps in eternal oblivion she will sleep as peacefully with coral as with the cold earth. John, I remember that when we first met the year before last you told me you believed that this island would have an influence upon your life, and you told me about the south wind of love. At the time I thought how always with us the south wind brought rain, and I wondered if you had remembered those tears. The south wind has turned to

rain for you, but when the time comes to go do not leave us with hatred of our island ”

“Indeed, no,” he said “And if I could have foreseen what would happen to me here I would have chosen to suffer it I have been saying to myself all the time I was ill that although I have lost her I shall keep for ever a memory of unbroken beauty She will live with me as young, always fair. It is no use my pretending I want to stay on Lipsia any longer. I don’t The island is empty, and it will be unbearably empty when I am up and about again, because I shan’t be able to kill the emptiness with the work I was doing when I fell ill. In any case, the situation on the mainland is such that they are not likely to keep me here much longer As soon as the Minister accredited to the Provisional Government in Salonica becomes the Minister accredited to the Court of King Alexander it will be necessary to sweep away any survivals of a more ambiguous state of affairs like the British Control Bureau in Lipsia. We are a reminder of irregular behaviour, and in a war where so much seems to depend on John Bull dressing himself up as Jack Horner ”

“Please, John, I don’t follow that. Who is Jack Horner ?”

“The good boy of our old nursery rhymes. And now with Uncle Sam competing for that Jack Horner dress John Bull wants it more than ever. So I think that it will presently be decided that the British Control Bureau of Lipsia must become a part of the indecorous past.”

John’s forecast was correct And if anything were wanted to spur the authorities into abolishing the British Control Bureau as at present constituted and administered it was the hungry moans of two British generals in Athens who, now that the Inter-Allied Commission for preventing King Constantine from hiding arms in improbable parts of

the Peloponnese or amassing wheat in unlikely parts of Thessaly had no further reason to exist, were wandering about like a couple of Othellos whose occupation had gone or like the gentleman in the song all dressed up and no place to go. These two generals agreed that if the British Control Bureau were broken up there would be enough fragments to fill their empty bellies with a pleasant job which with luck should nourish them to the end of the war, and that without leaving their comfortable quarters in Athens.

While John had been too ill to bother about the intrigues they had made considerable progress. So far as his personal feelings were concerned he would have been content to let the whole show be collared without lifting a finger to fill his fountain pen. However, he knew Wade would expect him to make a fight, and during the second half of August and the beginning of September he made those two generals sing for their supper. One by one, however, his allies fell, and when the Vice-Admiral was given a command elsewhere he knew the fight was up.

In September came his own recall, but by that time all that the two generals found of the pair of shoes into which they had hoped to step were the laces. The *Argo* was to be sent back to her owners. Of the twenty-three officers under John all except two applied to be transferred and their applications were granted. The Intelligence work reverted to a couple of isolated Spicer Bureaus in the Asiatic islands.

John asked to be allowed to go as far as Lepanto with the *Argo*, the last voyage she would make before she took back to Mudros the Japanese three-pounder and the depth-charges and the hammer-bombs and Mervyn Iredale's Maxim. This request was granted. He took with him Iredale who was to accompany him to London, and James Yarrow who was to hand over the yacht to her owners at Hydra, after which he was coming home. Kellaway and

Brackenbury stayed in Lipsia to wind up the controls. Hinks was left for the present on his island, where his portrait had been hung in the demarchion amid the enthusiasm of his grateful subjects, and John promised the little man to secure for him from Captain Spicer the best job going

The departure from Lipsia was emotionally upsetting. John had dined up at the old Turkish Consulate for the last time, and at midnight he drove down to the yacht which was moored stern on to the quay. When he arrived it seemed that half the population of the island was on board to bid him farewell, as well as all the many employees of the Bureau. He had bequeathed to Dr Militiades Vampas the furniture of his room at the Consulate, and it did not help him to preserve the stoicism appropriate to a naval uniform when the moment he stepped on board Vampas, his wife, and his six daughters rushed forward to kiss his hand, particularly as the Doctor with tears streaming down his cheeks insisted on proclaiming to the world that in losing John he was like a son who was losing his father, for the plump doctor was at least fifteen years older than himself.

"Tell Pneumatikos to push off as soon as possible," John told Iredale. "When I went over to say good-bye to Majendie this evening I said we should sail soon after midnight." Then he turned to Theodore Ladas.

"Ah, you oughtn't to have bothered to come down."

"I brought you here first. I must see the last of you."

But though the words were the words he would have used once upon a time the voice was not the voice of the old Theodore Ladas.

"I wish to God, my dear friend, that I had not to leave you as you are," John said, grasping his hand.

"And I wish to God we were both happier men. Still, I must pull myself together for the sake of the girls."

You'll come and stay with us when the war is over, Oglvie?"

"We'll meet somewhere," John replied, evading the direct answer

"I wonder if we will, John," Euphrosyne said. "I don't feel that we shall ever meet again."

He raised her hand and bent to kiss it.

"Somewhere we'll meet."

But she shook her head

"I'm afraid you're going to have rather a rough crossing."

"Yes, it's blowing hard from the south," John agreed "We shall catch it when we get out of the lee of the island."

The people were being cleared off the yacht. In another few minutes they would be under weigh

"Dearest Euphrosyne, thank you for so much. Good-bye, dear Aglaia Good-bye, my dear friend."

"We'll walk along the mole and give you a last wave," Theodore Ladas said, trying hard to be his old buoyant self

But when the *Argo* was pitching into the darkness off the mole, although there was a sound on the wind of numberless farewells the bass of Theodore Ladas did not ring out above them all as once upon a time

"By Jove, sir, it's going to be a dirty night," young Iredale prophesied "Yarrow's gone up to his hammock I'll make you comfortable, and then I think I'll turn in That was all a bit wearing, wasn't it?"

About four o'clock in the morning John, who had been fighting sea-sickness all night, was telling himself in an agony of the mind that they must be passing over the stretch of water where the *Whinchat* was torpedoed and that he might be at this moment nearer to the body of Zoe than since they parted on that fatal June morning almost exactly three months ago. Suddenly the skylight above his bed was smashed. A green sea streamed over him.

John shouted for Mervyn and they wrestled with the furniture floating about the saloon. This time it was no use either of them trying to fight sea-sickness. Both vomited. Bodily ills were too much for John's mental ills. In his wretchedness he forgot about Zoe, and when at last exhausted by retching he lay down in the owner's cabin, not heartache nor bugs nor sea-sickness kept him from sleep.

He did not wake till the *Argo* was passing between the high banks of the Corinth Canal. The wind had dropped, and he sat on deck watching Hellas glide past.

When they reached Lepanto the French boat in which they were to travel to Italy had not arrived. It was a mellow afternoon, with a hint of autumn in the sunlight, and they rowed off in the dinghy which was almost as large a craft as could enter that half-choked harbour, the high castellated walls of which enclosed water that was darker than a dragon's green. In the mysterious emptiness they seemed to be rowing across the moat of a spell-bound castle. The fortification of the harbour was prolonged to encircle the little town on the slope and looked like some old painting of Rhodes. Perhaps to these walls and these red-tiled roofs the people of three and a half centuries ago had climbed to see if they could mark the progress of the most splendid, the most decisive, and the most valuable sea-battle since Salamis. Don John of Austria. Venetian Barberigo . . . Doria and his Genoese . . . the Marquis of Santa Cruz. Colonna with the Papal galleys . . . Cervantes himself shot through the left hand by a Turkish bullet . . . Sir Richard Grenville who fought at Flores in the *Revenge*. The little town could scarcely have changed at all in appearance since that great day for Christendom. Across the silken waters of the gulf the mountains of Achæa rolled along the pale blue sky even as Phormio must have beheld them when from Naupactus he harried the triremes of Lace-

dæmon, or as, ages before the Athenian admiral, the descendants of Heracles must have beheld them, the bulk of Erymanthus towering behind, when they built the fleet here to invade the Peloponnesus and create the Sparta of history

They had walked up through the narrow streets which were three feet deep in golden grain, for the harvest had been threshed and would soon be garnered. Walking over the grain their footsteps were silent as the footsteps of the ghosts that haunted this spot where Clio herself brooded

"Well, I'm glad I've seen Lepanto," said John

They sat for a long while in silence, contemplating that scene so heavy with history, and about the streets the people moved noiselessly over the golden grain

"We can't see Missolonghi from here," said James Yarrow at last, "but it lies away to the right"

"And behind Atalanta raced with her suitors in Calydon," said John.

"You two always make me feel so ignorant," said Mervyn Iredale sadly. "Who was Atalanta?"

"A young woman who outran all in Greece until Meleager dropped three golden apples which she stopped to pick up and so lost the race with him," John told him. "Some of the Argonauts under Meleager came to Calydon and slew the great boar which was ravaging the country, and the hide was presented to Atalanta"

"It beats me how you remember all that," Iredale declared, shaking his head in bewilderment.

"James and I learnt that kind of thing at school when we were young. You having been trained to be a soldier were not supposed to require any knowledge of the past."

"Well, I suppose *Argo* ought to be going back," said James Yarrow at last. "We ought to reach the Canal before dark. I'll see you in London and find out what's

going to happen next I ought to get off in under a week”

John and Iredale walked down to the level water-meadows outside the walled town and watched the little ship dip her Blue Ensign in farewell, watched her until she was lost to sight round the Straits

“I shall be thirty-five next month, Mervyn Half-way through my life if it gives me the allotted span ”

It was seeming to him that the *Argo* was bearing away with her that first half. And their baggage heaped up by the stone jetty which served the commerce of Lepanto to-day instead of that ghostly gothic harbour, added to the sense of finality when the *Argo* was lost to sight. Sitting here with their luggage in the amber sunlight of the September afternoon they had come to the end of their Greek adventure The Argonauts were scattering

An hour later a despatch-boat flying the tricolour appeared from the contrary direction the yacht had taken. A boat put off

“It’s the *Bougainville*,” John exclaimed “How extraordinary!”

“Why, sir?”

“Why, it was in the *Bougainville* that I left Gallipoli I wonder if Captain Gaubert is still in command ”

He was, and overjoyed to welcome John again

“Almost two years to a day since you travelled with us to Icaros Do you remember that droll of a Rodier who pushed the Boche off the quay? *Et la guerre, mon cher, ça dure, hein?*”

“I don’t think it’s ever going to stop You’re not growing melons yet, *mon capitaine*”

“Ah, those melons If it goes on much longer, I shall have to grow *immortelles* for my own grave ”

“But you don’t look a day older,” said John

“Ah, my friend, at my age one is old enough ”

They dined well, for Captain Gaubert had given his

cook orders to plunder Patras of the best it could offer. They dined too well indeed, for the south wind began to blow fiercely after sunset and though it was all right so long as they were making their way up the Ionian they caught it on their beam when they were crossing the Straits of Otranto, and the rolling of the *Argo* was being rocked in a cradle compared with the rolling of the *Bougainville*.

Captain Gaubert insisted on John's occupying his cabin, but there were two or three hours round dawn when he felt the kindest hospitality would have been to fling him overboard and put him out of his misery.

"You look rather shaky, sir," young Iredale observed when they disembarked at Taranto.

"I had a ghastly night "

"I catted like anything. It was that wine at dinner "

"I wouldn't have minded catting so much. But I was in vile pain. I am still "

The train to Rome was packed, and there was an unpleasant row at one station because an Italian officer who tried to get into a compartment which was occupied by two English officers and two nurses was pushed out and falling on the permanent way broke his leg.

Fortunately neither John nor Iredale saw the disgraceful business, but John tried to explain to Italian officers in their compartment that the offenders were probably not regulars. Iredale as a regular soldier was gibbering with rage and injured pride.

"Do try to make these fellows understand, sir, that those blights are probably temporary officers in the Army Service Corps or something. Not pukka soldiers at all."

Rome was exquisitely tranquil and after the diamonded marble and dazzling clarity of the Grecian air it seemed a honied city in a dream. The shadows were soft and blue, not ebony-hard like the shadows of Greece.

On the second afternoon of their stay John bought a

Propertius and went for a drive by himself along the Appian Way. Telling the coachman to come back for him in a couple of hours, he sat beside a tomb and searched for that allusion which had been haunting him. At last he found what he wanted in the Second Book:

*seu mare per longum mea cogitet ire puella,
hanc sequar, et fidos una aget aura duos;
unum litus erit sopitis unaque tecto
arbor, et ex una saepe bibemus aqua,
et tabula una duos poterit componere amantis,
prora cubile mihi seu mihi puppis erit.
omnia perpetuar saevus licet urgeat Eurus,
velaque in incertum frigidus Auster agat,
quicumque et venti miserum vexastis Vlixen,
et Danaum Euboico litore mille rates,
et qui movistis duo litora, cum ratis Argo
dux erat ignoto missa columba mari
illa meis tantum non umquam desit ocellis,
incendat navem Iuppiter ipse licet.
certe isdem nudi pariter iactabimur oris
me licet unda ferat, te modo terra tegat*

Should my girl think of sailing over the long sea, I will follow her. One breeze shall waft onward us two faithful lovers, one shore shall serve for sleep, one tree shall give us shade, and from one fountain shall we both drink. One plank shall be the couch of two lovers, whether it lie in the prow or the stern. I will suffer everything. Let the savage East Wind drive us on, or the chill South Wind fill our sails upon a blind course. Though all you winds should blow that once tormented the wretched Ulysses and cast a thousand Grecian ships upon the Eubæan shore, and you that moved two shores when the dove was sent to guide Argus, steersman of 'Argo', across an unknown sea. Let her never be absent from my eyes and Jupiter himself may burn our ship! Surely together we shall be cast naked upon the same shore, me the waves may bear

*away, if only the earth may cover thee Te modo terra tegat!
Te modo terra tegat!*

And turning the pages he read elsewhere:

*Vidi ego odorati victura rosaria Paesti
sub matutino cocta iacere Noto*

*I have beheld the rose-gardens of scented Pæstum that
should have lived on he blasted by the South Wind of the
morning*

When John got back to the hotel he found a magnificently spruce Assistant Provost-Marshal waiting for him

"Oh, look here, I've been chasing this subaltern of yours Do you know where he is?"

"I don't know at all. What do you want him for?"

"He's not wearing gloves"

"Why should he?"

"It's laid down that officers passing through Rome must wear gloves."

"Oh, is it?"

"So if I don't see him will you strafe him? I mean to say, we must keep our end up with these Italians, you know"

"You think gloves help to do that?"

"It's a matter of discipline, isn't it?"

"You think a British officer in gloves is a better officer than a British officer without gloves?"

"It's not a question of what I think, sir It's a question of what is prescribed for officers passing through Rome"

"I see, sir. Are there any special gloves you recommend?"

"Your subaltern will know what gloves he ought to wear"

"Young Iredale was badly wounded in France and he's been doing a man's job in the Aegean since last December,

and if you think I'm going to make him buy a pair of gloves to walk about Rome for a couple of days you're a bigger damned fool, sir, than you look "

"I object to your language, sir, and I warn you I shall lodge a complaint about it "

"Well, I object to your chasing subalterns to make them wear gloves in Rome, when you can't keep British officers in Italy from behaving like cads. When you can stop them from pushing Italian officers out of railway-trains and breaking their legs you can get busy with gloves, sir."

In the train going north John told Iredale of this conversation, and he was amused when Iredale exclaimed that the A P M. was right

"Well, get a pair of gloves in Paris, Mervyn, or the French may make a separate peace "

"But all the same, he *was* right, sir," the boy insisted.

At Turin a genial blue-tabbed Railway Transport Officer took them along to where the best vermouth could be sampled, and when he shook hands at the train before they went on he begged them to excuse his gloves.

"Look here, Mervyn, you must buy me a book of etiquette when we get to Paris. We're evidently getting back into that civilization for the security of which I understand we are fighting You and I must not let civilization down "

At Modane the sleeping-car attendant of the Italian train came up to John on the platform

"*Scusi, signor capitano Lei parla italiano?*"

"Yes, what's the trouble?" John asked in Italian

"I don't like to bother you, *signor capitano*, but an English officer has taken the ash-tray in one of the cars I look after. *È niente* It is nothing, but I am charged twenty-five liras for an ash-tray if it is missing from my car. You'll understand they are not worth that, but the wagon-lit company puts that value on them "

"You must be mistaken," John told him "Perhaps he knocked it out of the window "

"I suggested that to the officer, but he said he knew nothing about the ash-tray I told him it would cost me twenty-five liras, but perhaps he could not understand my English very well, and hearing you speaking Italian I thought I would ask you to explain *Mille scusi, signor capitano* "

"Which officer is it?" John asked, looking along the platform

The attendant pointed out a young medical probationer who in time of peace would still have been in an hospital as a student.

John went up to him and called him aside

"What's this the attendant tells me about your putting one of the ash-trays in your pocket?"

"I didn't think it was worth anything," said the young man, sulkily blushing

"Well, the poor fellow has to pay twenty-five liras for everyone missing. So you'd better give me the amount and I'll pay him for it."

"I'm not going to pay twenty-five liras for a rotten ash-tray," said the young man, putting his hand in his pocket "Here, you can give it back to him."

John was staggered by such shamelessness.

"You'll either pay up twenty-five liras and let me explain you pushed it out of the window by accident, or I shall pay the man and you'll come round with me to the Admiralty as soon as we get to London."

"Why can't I give him back the ash-tray?"

"Because wagon-lit attendants are not going to say that British Naval officers are thieves and liars."

"There's the money," said the young man sulkily. "But I call it a swindle."

John walked back to the attendant and gave him the money

"The officer knocked it out of the window with his elbow by accident"

The attendant smiled benignly.

"I've discovered why British officers have to wear gloves in Italy, Mervyn," John said when the French train was bearing them away from Modane

"Why, sir?"

"To prevent their leaving finger-prints on stolen property."

Paris seemed darker than ever, and the streets more full of black figures of mourning. They stayed at the Ritz where John dined with some of the Embassy people. The next day he went to lunch with Gabrielle who was still in the same apartment overlooking the Parc Monceau. An old friend of her youth was at lunch, a General Floriot, who spoke with severity about Salonica, but John gathered that much of the criticism was due to the fact of his not holding a command out there. He was a man of apparently fifty with thinning grey hair and pince-nez, and looking from him to Gabrielle John found it hard to believe that they were quasi-contemporaries. Perhaps she divined his thought, for she went out of her way to recall how kind Edmond had been to her when she was a very little girl and he a lieutenant in the Artillery

John asked him about the prospects of the war's coming to an end, and the General was full of pessimism. Hardly an American had yet put in an appearance, although they had now been in the war since April last. Matters in Russia were going from bad to worse. The English were leaving too much to the French. And the Italians. . .

Oh, la, la, ces Italiens!

James Yarrow was missing a treat

The General had to go away soon after lunch. John and Gabrielle were left together.

"You are looking terribly thin, *mon ami*," she said.

"I told you I was rather ill during the summer "

"Yes, but, John, there is something else Your look is very strange I have not seen in you such a look "

It was a fine warm day. They were sitting on the wide window-seat All the trees in the park were still wearing the full green of summer, and yet autumn was already in their foliage, or was it autumn in his own heart that made those trees seem so weary of the green they still wore? He turned abruptly to Gabrielle and related to her the history of Zoe Her eyes were filled with tears.

"It is such a tragedy, John Thousands of young women all over Europe who weep for men they have lost, and you through the violence of war have lost *ta femme*. It is very ironic. You have no picture of her, yes?"

He pulled out a pocket-book and took from it the snapshot he had found that February day under a tropical shell

"That is all I have "

"I can see her more easily in your words," she told him. "And in this month you were to be married That is the strange look you have Her body was never found?"

"No, the other bodies were washed ashore, but not hers "

"Yet, perhaps that was kinder, John *chéri*, because you have not seen her in death. And I think for the thousands of women who weep for their lost loves it is kinder that they cannot see them mutilated "

"Yes, but in dreams I see her swirling on through the dark sea, so dark that I can never see her face Just the shape of her swirling always just out of reach until I wake "

"It is terrible for you It is terrible "

A silence fell as if between them that dark sea was surging

"And what will you do now, John?" she asked

"I think I'm in rather a feeble state I shall see when I go to London If I am fit they will find me a job somewhere There was some talk at dinner last night of my coming to Paris "

"That would be wonderful "

"Would it be? I don't think it would be, dearest Gabrielle .I haven't any energy left in me, and it would be ridiculous in my present state to take on the kind of work they want me to do here. I wish I could, because I should be happier working, but when you have more hours of the twenty-four in acute pain than out of it no good work can be done, and I'm not going to pretend."

"But you *are* looking very ill "

"And it isn't pining for Zoe," he assured her "In fact I comfort myself sometimes by telling myself that even were she alive the wedding would have had to be postponed until I was well again "

"I was saying to myself that perhaps you would write another play now "

"In my present mood I feel as if I should never write another play as long as I live I feel as if for nearly three years I had been doing nothing else except write plays. Actually I have written nothing since that first act of *Mary Queen of Scots* Dear Gabrielle, forgive me for coming here and inflicting my depression on you, but I longed to see you, and you have been all I knew you would be. What is your next part?"

"We open next month It is a sort of mystic play about the war, but I do not think it can be a success because we are so tired of the war now in France *Ça dure Ça dure. Ça dure* We read on the posters, ON LES AURA, but we all begin to wonder if we ever will have them Oh, *ces sales Boches, ces sales Boches*, they have destroyed the whole world "

Mervyn Iredale and John left France by Havre that night. It was blowing hard There was some talk about

a boat-drill for the mixture of all sorts crossing the Channel John declared nothing would move him from his bunk If they were hit by a torpedo he desired to go to the bottom as quickly and comfortably as possible

London was as gloomy as Paris

"Well?" said Captain Wade when John reported in that little room at the top of 41 Adelphi Terrace

"Well, sir I think if I hadn't been ill for practically a month I might have kept the show together."

Wade shook his head

"No, no, they were determined to collar it But what have you been doing to Tommie Bancroft?"

Colonel Bancroft was the head of the kind of organization in Italy which John had had in the Aegean He had seemed an able fellow, but John had paid little attention to his work in Rome on the way through

"Have I been doing anything to Tommie Bancroft, sir? He was very agreeable to me on my way through Rome Gave me two champagne dinners and told me that there was no need at all to see the Italian Directors of Naval and Military Intelligence "

Captain Wade grunted

"Well, he sent a telegram to the Foreign Office to say that if there was any question of appointing you to work in Italy he must notify the F O that such an appointment would not be well seen by the Italian Government on account of your Venizelist activities He evidently thought you might try to pinch his job."

John laughed contemptuously

"No wonder he was so anxious to keep me from seeing any of the Italian Hownows and Whatnots. These intriguing careerists!"

"Well, what would you like to do?"

"Rest for a while, sir "

"Yes, but after you've had a rest?"

"Have you anything in view?"

"Well, there's a talk of giving you the Intelligence in Algeria, Tripoli and Tunis. Do you think you're up to it? You'd have to build the whole show up from the start."

"I'm afraid I'll have to be much better than I am at present, sir. And I take it whatever has to be done in North Africa will have to be done quickly."

"As quickly as possible."

"Of course I may be wrong, but I doubt if any doctor will pass me for North Africa. Briggs in Paris was suggesting I might join his show."

"Would you like that?"

"I'd prefer North Africa, if my health allows it."

At that moment Captain Wade's secretary brought in a letter.

"This has just come over from the Foreign Office, Chief."

He slit the envelope with a paper-knife.

"Here's a jolly strafe!" he exclaimed. "What on earth were you playing at in Paris? Listen to this from young Barrington."

Dear Captain Wade,

Sir Charles Burton asks me to say that he has just heard with considerable surprise that Lieut-Commander Ogilvie while on his way through Paris from Greece the day before yesterday went to Maxim's and in very mixed company talked most freely about confidential matters in Greece which he should never have mentioned in public. Sir Charles desires you will call Lieut-Commander Ogilvie's attention to this most culpable lack of discretion on his part which it is hoped will not occur again.

Yours sincerely,

Guy Barrington.

"But I never went near Maxim's," John said.

"Didn't you? Where did you go?"

"I dined with some of the Embassy people at the Ritz on the only night I had in Paris. Of course I spoke freely to them about matters in Greece, but after all there was no harm in that."

"Of course not. You didn't go anywhere else?"

"I lunched with an old friend of mine in her apartment. Gabrielle Derozier, the actress. There was a General Floriot at lunch. He held forth about Salonica, but I said very little."

"Who was at the dinner at the Ritz?"

John told him.

"Oh, Charlie Knatch was there, was he? And Briggs was talking of your working with him in Paris?"

"Yes."

"Charlie didn't like the idea of that. Charlie got worried. Charlie thought he'd spike your guns. Of course he wouldn't expect the Permanent Under-Secretary to say anything definite. He thought you'd just get a quiet mark against your name and if there was any question of sending you to Paris that appointment would be squashed at the F O. The damned sly—by god, I've a good mind to make a particular point of moving you to Paris."

"No, please, sir, I don't want to go to Paris for one thing, and I'm really sick of intrigues. I've had nothing else now since I first went to Salonica. At first it used to amuse me to score off them, but I'm afraid I let the B C B go without as good a fight as I ought to have put up. When the Admiral was to be transferred I felt I couldn't start all over again. Admiral Cordell was a great sportsman. He gave me some of the best laughs I ever had, and he never let the show down."

"Would you like to be my number two here?"

"I'd like to be your number two anywhere, sir, but I wouldn't be any use at present as a number twenty-two."

"No, but when you're fit again I'll carry on till the

war is over, and then if I resign about a year later you're bound to get my job. It's good fun, you know, especially in peace time when you can move about a bit."

"I'll have to be frank, sir, and say I wouldn't really care for your job. When the war's over the only thing I want is to be a free man."

"But you'd be free enough in my job."

"Any kind of Government employment, even such a shadowy appointment as the Chief of the Secret Service, would be absolutely beyond me."

"Why?"

"I couldn't stand the eternal jealousy. I suppose some of my contemporary playwrights are jealous of my success, but they can always turn into dramatic critics and take it out of me. And anyway jealousy over the favour of the public doesn't worry an artist, because he knows how hard he has to work to preserve his popularity. Oh, I don't mean by pandering to what is believed to be public taste, but by maintaining the level of his performance. But the jealousy of soldiers, and I'm afraid I've got to say of sailors and of consuls, and indeed of everybody who is a paid servant of modern government is something I cannot face."

"A bit of jealousy doesn't hurt a man," Captain Wade growled. "I rather like to feel that everybody else is coveting my job."

"But I'm really very fond of people," John replied. "And it does shock me when I find I can't travel from Greece to England without stirring up the uneasiness of those who fancy I'm a possible threat to their careers. No, sir, not Paris, please, and not Rome, and not even London. Africa, perhaps, if the doctors let me go there."

John noticed that his arrival in London was a source of anxiety even to the people who had been working in the office at 41 Adelphi Terrace since he went out to Gallipoli.

Carstairs, Osborne, Hargreaves, Browne-Pawson and Chorley were all a shade too excessively polite, a shade too eager to assure him what a remarkable amount of power he had managed to accumulate in his own hands out in the Aegean

"Look here, sir," said Mervyn Iredale to him one day soon after they returned, "I think these blights want us out of the way. What about this North African show Captain Wade suggested? Can't we get busy?"

"It's being opposed by the people who are running the Intelligence in Morocco. And anyway my doctor says I must take at least three months off. You had no luck with your medical board either?"

"That's it," the boy replied gloomily. "There's not a chance of my getting back to the battalion. They're in this push we're making now round Ypres. This is a rotten show too," he added.

They were at the Alhambra seeing *The Bing Girls Are There* which in its failure to live up to *The Bing Boys* of the previous year was symbolical of the spirit of that gloomy London autumn of 1917.

"And look at the audience," he added. "Look at all these temporary fellows. There isn't an officer in sight who knows how to put on a uniform."

"They're being killed too fast to learn," John reminded his intolerant subaltern.

Nothing seemed to John more typical of the change which three years had wrought in London than the licensing by the Lord Chamberlain of two plays by the French dramatist Brieux—*Damaged Goods* and *The Three Daughters of M. Dupont*. *Damaged Goods* had hitherto been considered a daring production even for some Sunday night drama club to put on the stage. That it should be licensed for public performance and what is more prove a popular success showed how ineffective the old British blinkers were to protect the hacks of morality against

fright in the mad rush of this war-world's petrol-driven opinion. The success of *Damaged Goods* encouraged a revival of *Ghosts* Syphilis was the dainty heroine that now tripped across the London stage Oh, well, the mass of decayed rubbish left lying about from the Victorian era could hardly be shifted without an unpleasant smell

Toward the end of the month President Wilson issued a disclaimer to the current belief that the United States had entered the war as an ally of the Allies The United States had entered the war to make the world safe for democracy This coincided with a pronunciamiento by Gross Admiral von Tirpitz that Germany was fighting the war to destroy Anglo-American capitalism

The people of London, preoccupied with the air-raids every night and learning for the first time that the full moon was a matter of some importance for a city they had supposed independent of the moon, were not much encouraged by President Wilson's declaration The bombs dropped by the Gothas were bad enough, but to them had now been added the terror of the anti-aircraft defences. The odds against being hit by a bomb were long, but the odds against being hit by one's own protectors were much shorter

One evening after the maroons had sounded the alarm, John was walking down an empty Piccadilly towards his club, calculating the immensity of the odds against an individual's being hit, and had just reached the Ritz when there was a shattering roar, it seemed, immediately in front of him He had not heard such a roar since that mine James Yarrow had exploded with a rifle-shot. He walked on, his inside feeling slightly curdled, and just past the gate into Green Park beyond the Ritz he saw through the railings a crater in the ground.

"That would have made 'em sit up in the hotel, sir, if it had been fifty yards farther east," observed a policeman who was approaching to move on inquisitive spectators

John noticed a couple of tattered old men and an old woman sitting on a bench beside the railings. The bomb had dropped within twenty yards of them, but they had not moved. He wondered if they were paralysed by fright, and put his hand in his pocket for some money to stand them a night's lodging, but the men eyed him blearily as if they suspected him of designs on their liberty in the interest of the army. Their sour stench mingled with the acrid scent of explosive on the air.

John walked on to his club which he found practically empty of members. People had taken to going home early on these moon-imperilled evenings. One old gentleman held forth on the iniquity of allowing the tube stations to be used as refuges.

"The other night at Down Street I could hardly make my way along the corridor to the train. It's scandalous. Camped out there for the night with baskets of food and bedclothes. No proper organization, that's what it is."

"I went down to Bath to get away from air-raids," said another old gentleman. "But I had to come back. Every hotel full of elderly spinsters. All talking to you. Worse than bombs. So I came back to London."

"No proper organization," repeated the first old gentleman. "Just like the butter. Ah, Ogilvie, good evening. Where do you hail from?"

"Greece."

"Oh, really? I suppose you got plenty of butter out there?"

"Yes, I think there was plenty," John replied. "But I very seldom eat butter."

"Really? I wonder if you'd let me have your portion. I'm very fond of butter. But there's no proper organization in this club. And there you are. Greece, eh? What, Salonica, I suppose?"

"No, the Aegean."

"The isles of Greece where burning Sappho and all the

rest of it, eh? Never went there myself Always used to go and fish in Norway till this damned war upset everything I say, was that a bomb or one of our maroons I heard about half an hour ago?"

"A bomb about three hundred yards along in Green Park"

"Having a shot at Buckingham Palace, I suppose Queer fellows these Germans. Has the all clear sounded yet?"

"Not yet."

"When will the war be over?"

"Never," said a younger man in khaki, farther along the table.

After dinner John and this younger member, a lieutenant in some line battalion back on a few days' leave from the Ypres Salient, foregathered in the billiard-room.

"Things aren't too good in Flanders, eh?" John asked

"I'd say they were about as bloody bad as they could be if I didn't know they'd be worse as the autumn goes on And so long as the British Expeditionary Force is commanded by a good-looking sheep who thinks that the only way to fight the Germans is the way two rams fight over a ewe by butting at one another, things will go on getting worse Blood and mud, that's what Passchendaele will stand for in the future."

"You don't think much of Haig?" John asked

"Oh, the men like him all right But this country doesn't breed great generals I dare say he's no worse than any of the others You've been out in Greece, eh? I nearly came out to you last December."

"Really?"

"Yes, my services were applied for because I speak modern Greek I was excavating with the British School during the three years before the war."

"What is your name?"

"Onslow. Wilfrid Onslow."

"Oh, well of course, I've read most of your work. What a pity you couldn't come out to me."

"Yes, I should have enjoyed it."

Here was a brilliant classical scholar of the younger generation, and his life would probably be thrown away in Flanders when he might be doing useful work even at Salonica.

"It must be appalling in the Ypres Salient," John said. "I feel as if I'd not been in the war at all when I meet people like you."

"I don't see why you should feel like that. You were at Gallipoli, weren't you?"

"Yes, but only on the beach at Anzac. I had the luck at the beginning to be refused for active service. I was furious at the time. I remember sitting in this billiard-room just three years ago almost to a day and feeling sick with envy of people in khaki."

"I don't think you need sigh your heart out for Flanders," said Onslow. "By Jove, I *should* have liked to get out to Greece."

He asked questions about various places, and a couple of hours later John felt embarrassed to realize how long he had been talking about his own adventures without hearing a word of Onslow's. He started to excuse himself.

"Good lord, don't apologize," the other exclaimed. "Listening to your talk about Greece has been like drinking *retzinato* again under a trellis of vine-leaves. I hope they don't get me. I *must* see Greece again."

"Why don't you pull strings while you're in London?" John suggested. "You might wangle a transfer to Salonica anyway."

"I couldn't now," said Onslow. "I couldn't leave the men now."

"No, I understand that. I should feel the same."

"And perhaps I shan't be killed. Everybody isn't killed. Only almost everybody. That bomb might have

got either you or me this evening if we were meant to be killed "

But Onslow *was* meant to be killed His spirit was set free from that bloodstained morass of Passchendaele a month later.

After John had been a month in London Captain Wade told him to take three months' leave in Italy. By the end of that time they would know whether the North African project would be accepted

John tried to persuade Elise to let Prudence accompany him to Citrano, but she would not consent She was in a state of nerves at the prospect of the war's continuing until David was old enough to be fighting in it He was sixteen now Only another two years And by now mothers looked upon the war as certain death Ichabod, ichabod to the spirit of August 1914 John had spent much of his time in London with Prudence and it was a disappointment when her mother would not let her accompany him She had provided him with the only sympathy he had wanted . the sense of sharing a bitter disappointment

John contemplated inviting Miriam out to Citrano, but he dreaded her inclination to identify Zoe with a stage in his development and to discern in her the symbol of that action which had once seemed so precious to him He wished Zoe to remain always in his memory as the loss of something young and beautiful He did not want to be telling himself that perhaps if she had lived and they had married their love would have grown old like this damnable war And that might be the effect of having Miriam close at hand in every mood, for when he was in the humour to rail against the waste of time these last three years had been she would encourage that humour since from the start she had believed that for him those years

would be a waste of time. Well, he must discover in his work when he returned to it if that was true. And Miriam was growing more hostile to the way in which the war had diverted the stream of life. She had just heard that Julius had returned to playing the violin in order that he might give concerts in aid of various war activities in the United States, and this had seemed to her as wrong for Julius as for John to be supposing himself a sailor.

"I can understand what he feels," John said. "You forget that the war is still a novelty in America. It is an experience through which nations and individuals have been doomed to pass, and I feel that the nations and the individuals who escape it now will pay later on. I'm only glad that Julius has found a more satisfactory way of what we used to call doing his bit than I found. He obviously could never be accepted for service in the field, and he's better playing his violin for the benefit of others than sitting in that frowsty room of mine in Salonica and reading other people's letters."

So John went off alone to Italy. He travelled by almost the last European express on which British officers were allowed to travel to Italy. Owing to the complaints of their behaviour they would only be allowed in future to travel in troop-trains.

At Turin when John entered the restaurant to get a meal there was only one other occupant of it. This was an elderly Milanese bagman who was reading a copy of the *Corriere della Sera*, and as he read John could hear him muttering to himself above the booming of a great west wind round the station: '*Brutto! Molto brutto! Brutto assai!*' Then he would ram some more *paste* into his mouth and shake his head lugubriously. He was reading the first news of Caporetto.

That booming west wind accompanied John's journey all the way to Naples, and in every paper the news from the North grew graver. It was evident the Italian army

had suffered one of the major disasters of the war At the hotel in Naples to his surprise and pleasure he met Athene Langridge.

"Why, John, isn't it lovely to see you again!" she cried And in the sudden emotion of meeting again somebody whom he had last seen while the world was at peace he kissed her

"Where's Wacey?"

"I've just said good-bye to him He has a job at St Nazaire "

"Off to the war?"

"Off to the war, John "

"That seems incredible now to me, you know!"

"And are you really coming to Citrano at last?"

"Yes, I'm coming to my Tower at last I have three months of peace for certain "

"Isn't that wonderful? And, John, you'll love your Tower "

"If I can get a car we'll drive back this evening," he said

"But I'll pay half the hire."

"Now, Athene, please don't start being polite "

When John saw his Tower again it was standing up black against the tattered red of a stormy sunset, and the wind was still blowing hard from the west.